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With Christmas and the end of 1979 just one issue away, it seems appropriate to address this philosophy column to the progress of our current design projects and what you can expect to see from us in time for Santa's big night. With luck, we should have a few new titles to put under the tree for local visitors to our Game Emporium but it is doubtful whether any of them will receive wide retail distribution until next year.

First out of the chute will be *WAR & PEACE* . . . a grand strategic game of the Napoleonic era—which, for want of a better description, will be a cross between *1776* and *DIPLOMACY*. Playable in both a two player and multiplayer format, it promises to offer something for everyone with an interest in the period. It is an eminently clean design by Mark McLaughlin with capable AH development by Frank Davis. With any luck, you may find an advertisement proclaiming its availability in the next issue.

THE LONGEST DAY has seen two ORIGINS come and go since it was first promised. It is our fervent wish that it doesn't see a third before release. The game's physical components are finished and now undergoing by-mail playtest. The sole occupation of Randy Reed for the last two years, *THE LONGEST DAY* has been given lavish art and design preparation. Only the pure size and price of the game leave us with any doubts as to how our first "monster" game will be received. The December *GENERAL* probably won't reach you until after Christmas, so look for *THE LONGEST DAY* in the spring.

CRESCENDO OF DOOM is also in by-mail playtest now and although we won't be able to advertise its availability until the December *GENERAL*, we will be accepting mail orders effective December 1 in hopes of filling at least a few Christmas stockings. If you wish to order *CRESCENDO OF DOOM* and/or *WAR AT PEACE* before they are formally announced, you may do so on December 1 for $15 each and the customary postage coupon. We make no promises about delivery by Christmas, but will do our best. Otherwise, you may wish to wait for the formal advertisement in the next *GENERAL*. *CRESCENDO OF DOOM* will eventually be followed by two more gamettes—one featuring the Americans and Italians entitled *G.I.: ANVIL OF VICTORY* and another on the Japanese approximately a year apart.

TITLE BOUT is the name of our statistical boxing game which will enter our Sports Illustrated line in the spring. With any luck, you'll find a mail order advertisement for it in the next issue. Like all of our other stat games, *TITLE BOUT* will feature hundreds of cards representing the great and near-great ring performers of the past and present. Although wargamers in general may find this less than thrilling news, the Sports Illustrated line is nothing to be scoffed at. This summer's past release, *MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL*, is currently leading the *entire* line—wargames included—in sales.

Further down the line you can expect the 1978 private label hit, *SOURCE OF THE NILE*, in AH packaging come spring. Currently undergoing AH development by Mick Uhl, this recipient of two Charles Roberts awards should be greatly improved in both visual appeal and rules comprehension. Mick is also developing Bruno Sinigaglio's revision of *BATTLE OF THE BULGE* which we hope to release at ORIGINS next July.

That brings us to the "whatever happened to _____" department. . . . *THE RISING SUN* has been returned to designer Larry Pinsky to be cut down into more manageable proportions and remains unscheduled at this time. We have invested heavily in mapboard art and development time, however, and are loathe to dismiss the project altogether. We still have high hopes that it wil eventually see publication. *FORTRESS EUROPA*, the western front equivalent of *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, designed by John Edwards, has been under contract for over a year, but we've uncovered many problems with it and the developer has been unable to work on it due to other projects so that we've had to relegate it to the back burner until the recent addition of game developer Alan R. Moon to the staff. *KESSELSCHLACHT* or *STREETS OF STALINGRAD* as we renamed it, was only under evaluation here. The designer didn't care for either our evaluation or the time we'd require to produce it, so he decided to publish on his own. Scratch one project. Now that the *MAGIC REALM* odyssey is over, Richard Hamblen can return to work on his *TRIREME* and *GUNSLINGER* designs. We hope to have the former done for the next ORIGINS.

This is by no means all we're looking at for the coming year. We've had numerous prototypes on hand for evaluation for some time now but are not at liberty to discuss them at this point. We're also keeping an eye on the recent releases of the "Third World". ORIGINS is not only a showplace for the consumer—it also serves to alert us to some of the finer designs by the hobby's smaller companies. Occasionally, one comes along which we think highly enough of to purchase, such as *SOURCE OF THE NILE*. With added AH development time and improved artwork, we can sometimes turn a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Naturally, until such evaluation and negotiations are completed, any further discourse would be more conjecture than fact.

This installment of the Philosophy wouldn't be complete without a few words on the missing *MAGIC REALM* feature. We'll make it as few as possible. Put simply, the article was plagued by the same problems which delayed the game past one promised deadline after another. In an attempt to right all the game's minor problems, the designer is hoping to provide us with a super comprehensive feature which will address all the questions you may have on the game system. Therefore, we just pushed it back an issue and will try again next time. In the meantime, the *PANZER LEADER* theme has given us a chance to add to our list of playing aids the sample *PANZER LEADER* pbm sheets provided in this issue's insert. Our thanks to Walter Cullen who designed, printed, and submitted the sheet for the enjoyment of his fellow *PL* enthusiasts.

PANZER LEADER: AN OVERVIEW

By Jeffrey Paul Jones

It is not too early to tell that *PANZER LEADER* will survive the test of age; in this demi-decade in which conflict simulation has undergone such a tremendous upheaval in terms of scope, production, and theory, four years plus is a long time. With more than thirty games a year assaulting our pocketbooks, it is always pleasant to note that some games remain almost timeless, the novelty never seeming to wear thin though other games come and fade as ghostly apparitions, having a brief, faltering existence before they are filed away to gather dust.

PANZER LEADER is not doomed in this manner. It remains one of the finer examples of our hobby, despite its brooding beginnings until it was finally sewn together into a workable mesh. Granted it has rough spots, I don't believe there is a game that doesn't, but it has enough *quality* to overcome them.

This article seeks to analyze that *quality* in terms of specifics: game boards, rules, units and unit capabilities, and the scenarios themselves; then offer a series of tactics for *PL* to show what ingenious actions can come from such a simulation. There is a reason why some games survive where others fail, and I hope to show what it is about *PL* which makes it such a success.

THE PLAYING SURFACE

In keeping with European terrain, the boards of *PL* are relatively passable in all areas. There are a few natural barriers to inhibit movement, and for this reason the boards are necessarily porous. The primary physical barriers are the cliffs of board B and the streams running the widths of the other boards, rarely inhibiting movement along the grain of the mapboards. For this reason it is normally simple to predict an opponents channel of attack: everywhere and anywhere he desires!

In most scenarios there are four to nine areas of penetration when an assault follows the grain. Then the blocking terrrain comes in the form of green hexsides. For example, in "Elsenborn Ridge" there are nine or ten paths to German victory, but all of them, at least for vehicular units, end in two channels one or two hexes wide at the apex and narrowed by forest hexsides.

Obviously the intrinsic and innumerable possibilities of geomorphic boards will change the complexion of any mapboard discussion, so I have narrowed things a bit. There are some boards that are used more than others, and some *positioning* of boards used more than others, so that some terrain features take on a special significance. With this in mind, I'll develop the properties of each board.

Board A is the lightfooted board, for if one fails to walk softly and carefully, he will become an exposed corpse; this single board is critical in half of *PL's* situations. Fully 70% is clear terrain; the stuff opportunity fire is made of. Another 15% is forested and provides cover, but the most remarkable features are the city of Grancelles and the primary stream which runs from the northwest to the southeast, bisecting Grancelles. This city is the largest in the game and is critical to nine of the thirteen situations using this board. Victory often depends on total control of the city and even if it doesn't, he who controls Grancelles controls three-fourths of the entire board.

The second important feature is the stream passing through Grancelles, primarily because it can be crossed only through that city or the single bridge hex at J2. The veteran will realize the importance here after slogging through "St. Lo" or "Operation Garden: Anticlimax" a few times. The river line is pitifully easy to defend. Even in situations where the attacker has easy access, he must pay dearly to establish control of the stream and the city, as seen in "Operation Goodwood."

A final note on Grancelles: at X-7, in the center of the city, there is a single hex of clear terrain. I assume that this represents a large town square or a city park of some sort. It also acts as a graveyard for units unprotected against overrun attacks. It has been my misfortune only once to misuse that hex, but I've used it to torment my competitors ever since.

Generally, board A is easy to control, but difficult to conquer. It is about as porous as any board, though, so in encounters that require only a crossing of the board, it is weak. For example, in "The Saar," German forces need only cross along the grain of the board and exit in one of four hexes at the center of the board. Even with opportunity fire used, the Allies can do nothing to prevent the massive German onslaught from dashing through comparatively unscathed. The Panzer Lehr triumph once again.

Figure 1 shows the most often used transit of the city board. Only on this board does a stream become such a vital feature, dividing the board not only in width, but also in length. The complete absence of elevated terrain gives cities and forests new impact, for each one is an obstacle that must be sighted around or into. At least twenty units are needed to sight all but the stream hexes because there are so many patches of hidden terrain. Despite the openness, the board can be troublesome to master.

Board B offers something new to the tactical gamer—sea and beach hexes. (I've often wondered why this was not lettered board A, since the Allied offensives covered by *PANZER LEADER* actually began on the beaches and moved inland; it would seem more logical to label the board in this manner. I've come to the conclusion that AH's graphics per-

FIGURE 1—Board A is characterized by decidedly level terrain. The yellow lines illustrate the most commonly used attack channels. Note that vertical attack channels end on the G file; this is due to actual scenario demands—no scenario dictates consistent vertical movement beyond that point. Movement normally moves to Sambleu from that point, and then back into Grancelles. The red lines show commonly used horizontal attack channels. There is a notable void in the center due to the stream. The seemingly disconnected red lines leading off the map represent first turn transit by attacking units which must set up out of the line of sight of the enemy.

Although it is easy to recognize the significance of Grancelles in controlling movement on the board, it is also important to note that despite the lack of hidden terrain, it is still difficult to actually "see" all hexes on the board. At least twenty units, placed as per the red dots on the board, are necessary.

sonnel felt that "B" should stand for beach. If that is the case, I'll go crazy trying to figure out what A, C, and D stand for.) Board B has a rather complex three dimensional set up which was explained satisfactorily to many of us by Randall Reed in Vol. 12, No. 1 of *THE GENERAL.* The beaches seem to lead up slopes to hilltop hexes, which in turn slope ever-so-gently inland, so that invading units fire uphill from the beaches but on level ground that is treated as uphill terrain from the interior. This often causes sighting problems and weapons' effectiveness disagreements, which are put to rest by rolling a die, reading the rules, or choosing a different situation.

Board B has several points of interest. First, it has more hilltop hexes than any other board (40) and affords the defender a tremendously commanding view of Allied invasion channels. Second, it has many slope hexes to delay an enemy advance. Third, the roads serve to channel invaders into the enemy guns if they use the roads, or they provide solid communication lines for the defender in the early going. Fourth, cliff hexsides present an almost impassable block in themselves, infantry units requiring a die roll of one to affect movement. And finally, all of this means something to only two of the twenty scenarios. I only wish there were more invasions provided in the game so that board B would gain some deserved importance.

This board is specifically designed as an invasion board and should be treated as such. As with all boards, it is laterally porous. With the forces provided in the scenarios it is adequately defended in spite of this. Thankfully, the two invasion situations that make any consequential use of the beaches further limit the amount of usable terrain by narrowing the playing surface to 70% of the printed area. This makes a coordinated defensive extremely tenable in the early turns, especially since elevated German forts, together with positions in the beach town of Rieux, can provide firepower to *any* invasion hex. These positions become weaker as the Allies move to the interior, but they have to get there first. The primary German problem is that there are always more units than they can fire at, it is a rare thing for the Allies to land only six or seven units at a time. Figure 2 shows how crucial invasion hexes can be controlled through careful fortification, block, and minefield placement.

Board C offers an almost unlimited number of possibilities. Esthetically creative, and having more sheltered terrain than any other (two cities amid a densely forested region), this forest board still offers at least seven attack channels, with alternate routes available. Unfortunately, only seven situations use this board to any effect.

It looks as if graphic's personnel were partial to green hexsides, or there was a printing short-circuit governing mixed terrain and weaving spidery roads, but the intricacies produced are a work of art in themselves. Figure 3 depicts the possibilities for a lateral offensive; much more limited are those which go against the grain—regretfully, there is only one scenario which uses the vertical aspects of the forest board and that is "Bulge: Thrust." Due to the special rule prohibiting German units the use of hex T11, the attack must follow the predictable lines: either through the forested hill at O2 and N3, or along the forest road connecting Wiln and St. Athan. The paths are almost too easily defended and the burdensome congestion becomes unbearable in the largest, most ludicrous traffic jam in all of *PANZER LEADER.* Once the German does achieve a breakthrough, he still has only one real pathway open to him, through St. Athan. When dealing with board C vertically, control of St. Athan can create just as many headaches for the enemy as the other areas to the north. (Note: "The Fortified 'Goose Egg' " uses this attack channel as well, but the assaulting armies have other, easier avenues on the parallel board.)

With the other boards, four or five key positions will often control or contest control of the playing area; however, board C constitutes a whole new breed of animal altogether. The terrain is so varied and intricate that an adequate defense usually involves a vast number of units. Even then, the death rate often remains low on both sides because of the terrain benefits on the CRT. Yet there are a few hexes that prove useful in many situations, affording excellent positions for spotting or using opportunity fire. These are indicated by the red dots in figure 3.

Finally, board D loosely combines the features found in the other boards. More than half the board is open territory, but another fourth is forested in random clumps. Again, lateral attack channels are numerous. But where the vertical attack channels on the other boards were predictable, those on board D are predictably deadly. To make a point, 65% of critical movement in all of *PANZER LEADER* occurs on this board. 61% of *that* involves vertical movement; and 63% of *that vertical movement* focuses on a single hex near Artain, BB6, at some point in play. Thus, 25% of *PANZER LEADER* concentrates on control of a single hex!

Figure 4 shows exactly why DBB6 is of paramount import, as the only way to affect an Artain river crossing is through that hex. Also, on the K, L, M, and N files, the channel is only three hexes wide. Due to the funneling nature of this terrain, board D is easily the deadliest board in the game, or at least

the *slowest.* In "The Encirclement of Nancy," it is possible for a meager German blocking force to hold an Allied juggernaut at bay for five or six turns before the breakout at Artain becomes inevitable, and in "The Fortified 'Goose Egg,' " with movement going in the opposite direction, the Allies can gain a decisive victory before the Germans ever move past the Y file (see "The Solid Wall" in the tactics section below).

Finally, there are no real advantageous positions on this board that command a lot of ground. This board is simple to defend piece by piece, but very difficult to control in its entirety.

Where many players spend their time looking at the elevated vantage points in *PL,* as in most three dimensional games, just as many ignore the most impressive terrain feature in *PL,* namely the streams. Since most of the scenarios involve some kind of a river crossing, special care must be taken to defend the bridges strongly—that is where quality play lies. I have *never* seen someone ignore a river line in *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* or *STALINGRAD* because the river lines double the defender. Slopes and hills have the same utility in *PL,* so everyone sends units racing for those positions. Often, though, a well-defended bridge hex will deny the enemy that advantageous terrain. A well-played game must be preventative as well as competitive, and all terrain must be taken into account.

THE GOLDEN RULES

The Golden Rule is not what most players will follow when engaging in combat in *PL,* yet the rules of the game are golden in the sense that they overcome many of the abiguities of *PANZERBLITZ,* still retaining a new slant on the game system by incorporating a fine battery of optional and experimental rules, and by increasing unit capabilities.

Overall, the *PL* rules allow a maximum *playability* (at the expense of some realism) in a fairly short amount of time. The game does not bog down as it does with many similar games, nor does the scope encompass any area to rival the recent behemoths, with the possible exception of the macro-game. The macro remains manageable, but to a much lesser degree than the individual scenarios; still, it is *playable.*

There are a few aspects of the game rules which allow *PANZER LEADER* to retain its excellence. The first of these is the sequential movement system. Although I've enjoyed simultaneous movement in several games, those games are now shelved because it is so difficult to find competent, interested ftf players. Thus *PL* has a solitaire value

FIGURE 2—This illustrates one of the many possible set ups for "Omaha Beach" and the kinds of coverage possible. In this case, the set up shows a solid beach defense when smoke shell concentrations are NOT being used. The beauty of it is that the Allies have the entire board to choose from for landing, but logically the attack must come from the thirteen hexes from K to W—the remainder of the beach frontage is sealed by mines and cliffs, and engineers seeking to punch a hole in the minefield wall should be eliminated handily. In the remaining invasion hexes, there is a solid front of German units or positional defenses, assuming the defenders occupy all hexes of Rieux. If intensive fire hits invasion hexes M through Q when the amphibians arrive, Rieux will remain unspotted and unthreatened, a critical point since that city is the true weakness of the defense. German rifle platoons in the city should be able to close assault survivors so that naval fire will not become a threat.
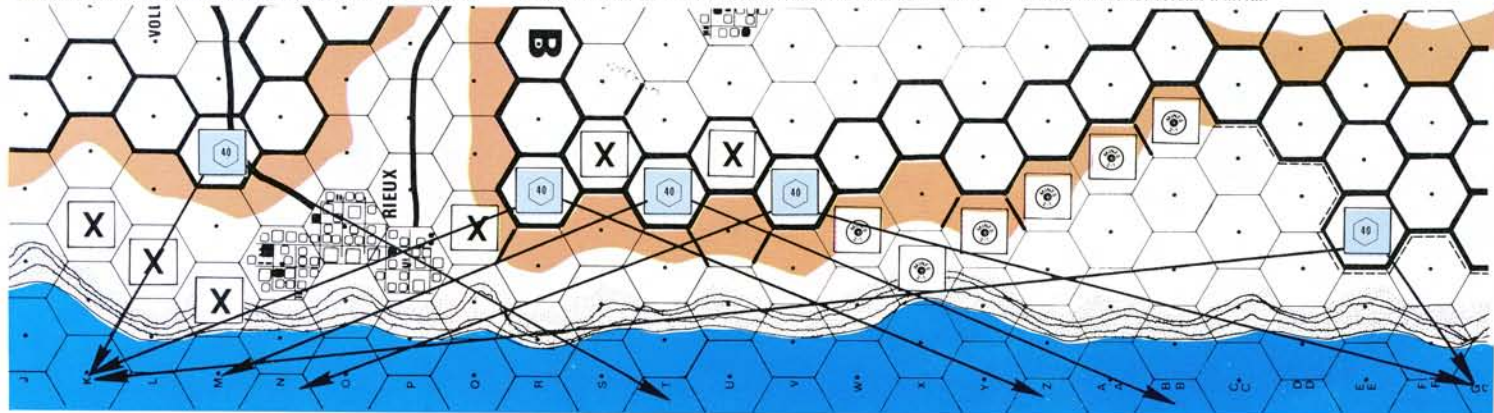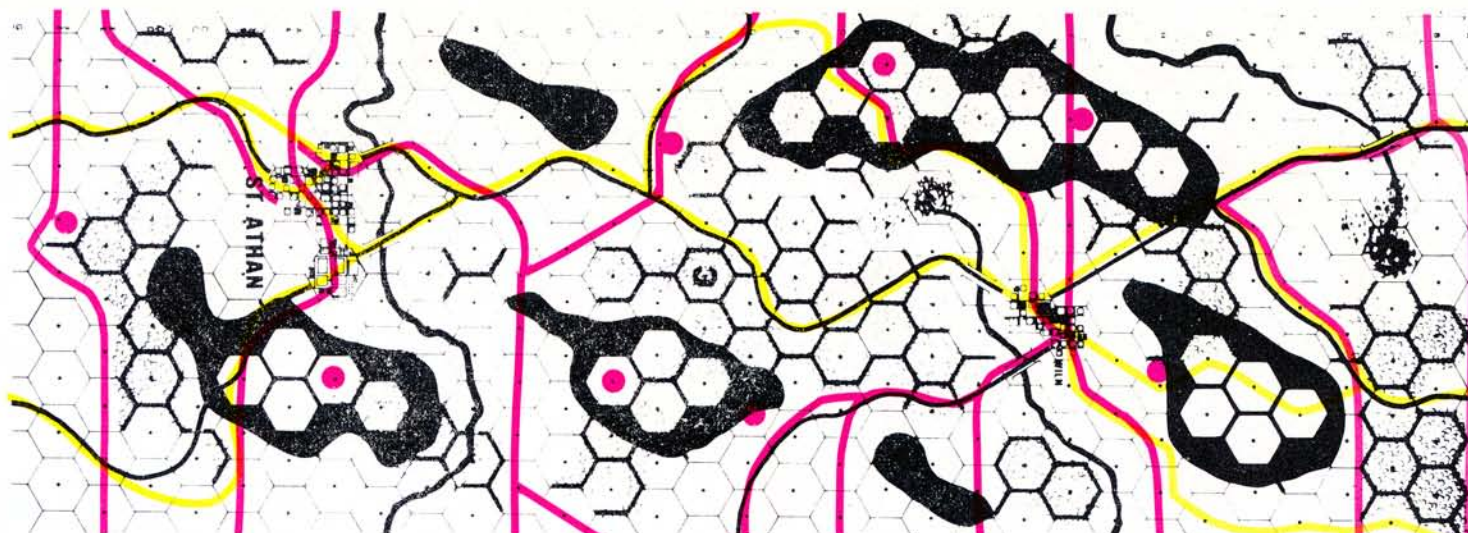
FIGURE 3—Once again, yellow indicates the vertical attack channels, red the horizontal. The former are only used in three situations, the latter in four. Most of these routes are wayward and round about due to the board's design. As in board A, the center has a tremendous block to uniform movement, this time in the form of dense forest. The dispersion of six elevated positions in combination with that forest makes the area very difficult to traverse under enemy fire. Depending on the scenario, the hexes marked with red dots become key spotting hexes, either for units on this board or for those on others. Many hexes also control vital attack channels.

that these other games do not. *PL's* sequential movement has received criticism, for it does favor the second player—he gets a sort of defensive first fire that is never present in simultaneous games. Because defensive firing units are then pinned and subject to subsequent enemy attack, the second player advantage is of questionable value until the final game turn, unless the experimental Function Mobility for Turreted AFVs rule is used. More of this later.

The second quality change in *PL* is the addition to carrier loading and unloading capabilities as they combine with movement, allowing both of these functions to take place in a single turn. This is a very clean system and no special bookkeeping is necessary as it is in *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS* where the system is slightly more complex. The rules permit an offensive to speed up a bit; in *PANZERBLITZ*, some situations are lost because aggressive units haven't the time to load infantry in what is often a three turn process; in *PL,* they have the time to load and still make progress forward.

A third addition concerns stacking requirements, which are delightfully uniform, but which cause some problems in high unit density scenarios when one analyzes the specifics of a player turn segment. This is *not* a criticism; the rule just causes players to be more careful how they move units and it forces foresight: with the exception of overrunning units, a stack of four friendly units may not be entered at all. In the turn sequence, vehicular units are moved first, followed by non-vehicular units. Therefore, it is quite possible to have a stack of four non-vehicular units holding up all the vehicular units to the rear. I think that this fairly accurately reflects some of the logistics of tactical warfare: vehicles move faster and would logically have to pass through friendly forces at times to reach the forward positions. That they be held up for safety and unity reasons is also logical. Imagine twenty Panther tanks and their entourage weaving their way through the 250 men of four German rifle platoons in heavily forested or rough terrain *in six minutes!* That would be interesting indeed!

The fourth rule that gives *PL* some quality is the real line of sight, plotted from the convenient dots placed in the center of each hex. Some have commented that this ruins the esthetic beauty of the boards; however after a short time, one really sees these dots for sighting purposes only. Though some actual sighting requirements may seem slightly questionable, they are decidedly uniform and quite manageable. I suggest a cut rubber band be used to determine sighting in place of the proverbial straight edge. It is easy to use and not subject to tangles and knots; in addition, pulling it taught does not sweep units aside on a congested playing area. It does have the disadvantage of the "whiplash effect," which sends units scattering off the field of play; but on the single occasion in which that occurred, my opponent insisted emphatically that the action was accidental, and in no way related to his decisive loss on the fifth turn of "The Saar."

And the fifth quality item in the rules is Indirect Fire. This is one of the four *real strengths* of *Panzer Leader* as far as making the game an adventure (the others will be developed later). Although the rules are rather abstract, their application is relatively simple. The adventure comes in trying to outguess or second-guess one's opponent: "Where does he think I'll put my IF to do the most damage, and should I put it there, or somewhere else less suspected? Or will he expect me to put it somewhere else and then move into those other hexes? I know! I'll put it at I4, knowing that he'll think I'll put it there until he realizes it's too obvious a place." One attractive part of IF, corrected in *AIW*, is that an

FIGURE 4—Color codes are the same as for board C. Note again the importance of DBB6 and Artain, and note also that this board is often the setup area for attacking forces, indicated by the several partial red lines leading to the board edges. There is very little commanding terrain on this board. If the use of any single board will determine the quality of play one is capable of, this is it.
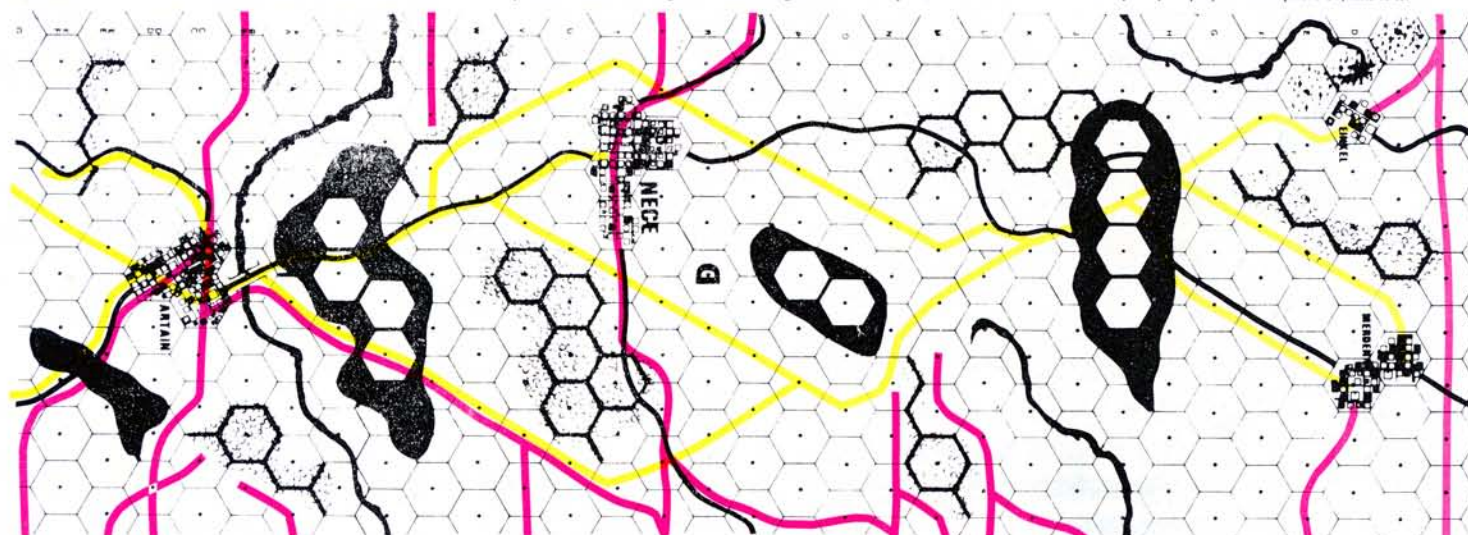
empty hex can be designated for IF. It is always a pleasure to set up a barrage a turn in advance and watch the enemy walk into the shellfire unawares. In one game of ''Goose Egg'' I eliminated two infantry-loaded halftracks and a Panther with this ruse in a single barrage.

The rules themselves provide an extremely workable framework for fair play; the rules extensions, the optionals and experimentals, provide a method to expanding existing situations, or balancing some that are dreadfully imbalanced. What follows is a discussion of these extras by delineating their advantages and disadvantages.

Infantry Quick-Time Speed. Rule: infantry units may double their movement allowance in clear terrain.
ADVANTAGES: 1. QTing units gain an extra hex of territory in a turn and often perform an early attack on a static defense line.
2. The attacker can beef up a close assault to better odds 50% of the time, providing enough units are available.
DISADVANTAGES: 1. QTing units defend at half strength against opportunity fire attacks.
2. QT can be used only in clear terrain, leaving units open to overrun attacks on the following turn.
3. There is a 50% chance of disruption for each unit, which could nullify planned close assaults.
NOTE: I've often wondered why QT could not be used if units were descending a slope, having a die roll from 3-6 result in dispersal. I do not seek to change the rules, but players may try this one and find it makes a difference in a few situations.

Opportunity Fire. Rule: non-phasing units may fire at enemy units which expend ¼ their movement allowance in sighted terrain.
ADVANTAGES: 1. Advancing units can be pinned in the open and subjected to subsequent indirect fire or overrun attack.
2. Units exercising this option can deny the enemy access to beneficial terrain or victory hexes.
3. Prevent overrun and/or close assaults.
4. Harass weak carrier units.
5. The *greatest advantage* is one of *threat*. Opportunity fire forces the enemy to move through protected, hidden areas, seriously effecting an aggressive forward thrust, unless a player has such superiority that he can push forward with impunity, as the Panzer Lehr does in 'The Saar''.
DISADVANTAGES: 1. Friendly firing units lose their direct fire capability in the next friendly player segment.
2. Hidden units become spotted.
3. Units lose their mobility for a turn unless functional mobility is used.
4. Better targets will undoubtedly present themselves if one exhausts his opportunity fire capability. It is a terrible feeling to watch heavily-laden trucks race across open terrain without fear of attack.
5. Actual playing time is extended because of the continuous counting of hexes to see if an actual opportunity fire attack is permissible.

Naval Support Fire. Rule: off-board strength points are used to simulate naval shore bombardment (Naval Artillery Strength Points or NASPs).
ADVANTAGES: 1. NASPs are very strong—they are always in excess of 100 H-class strength points.
2. NASPs can never be attacked or rendered totally ineffective, except by incompetent fire.
DISADVANTAGES: 1. NASPs fire only in groups of 20 strength points. This is a bother if one wishes to fire smoke, since that requires 25 factors; thus 40 NASPs must be expended for a single smoke shell concentration. This ''overkill'' is consistent with most naval fire.

2. NASPs are always fired at greater than six hex range, so they are always halved against armored targets, and are sometimes halved again when they are utilized in a direct fire mode against elevated defenders.
3. Indirect fire must be programmed two turns in advance instead of the usual one. The variables here often cause the fire to be wasted.
4. Finally, these NASPs usually belong to the *other* guy.
NOTE: Though the disadvantages seem to overshadow the advantages, Naval Support Fire is always an asset to the Allies. There is nothing really disadvantageous to that kind of power.

Panzerblitz Assault. Rule: German infantry units loaded on armor may unload and close assault enemy units that are being overrun.
ADVANTAGE: This provides a deadly one-two punch in which infantry advances and attacks like magic so that the Allies must always worry about a double threat to exposed units. In one game, my opponent said, ''You can use it if you want to, but you'll never get the chance to.'' On the final game turn, I did get the chance and it cost him the game.
DISADVANTAGE: None . . . for the Germans.

Functional Mobility for Turreted AFVs (renamed ''split-move'' in *AIW* so that we could say it in one breath without becoming tongue-tied. Rule: designated vehicles may fire in the combat phase, then move half of their movement allowance.
ADVANTAGES: 1. Units spotted while firing become invisible once again by moving to an unspotted hex. Suddenly, targets become fewer.
2. Units may occupy a hex on the same turn they destroy the enemy units within the hex. This is very useful for taking victory hexes on the final turn of a game.
3. Exploit breakthrough hexes before the enemy can plug the hole—a true blitzkrieg effect.
4. The one-half movement point allowance expenditure for firing does *not* count toward the one-fourth movement point expenditure required for opportunity fire spotting. If it did, much of the attack effectiveness of this rule would be lost, but there would be some delightfully brief and bloody firefights.
5. Used in conjunction with opportunity fire, units **may rectify the disadvantage of #3 above in opportunity fire.**
6. In a mobile defense or blocking action such as the Allies employ in ''Bulge: Thrust'' the second player's defensive fire last-move advantage can be exercised *every turn,* creating a deadly, mobile, firing blockade that retreats a single hex per turn and is almost impossible to break except by massive close assault tactics or flanking maneuvers.
DISADVANTAGE: I can see none, unless they are applied to individual situations.

Artillery Field-of-Fire Limitations. Rule: artillery weaponry fires through only three of six hexsides, according to its facing.
ADVANTAGE: Due to the highly restrictive nature of this rule, there is no advantage to the owning player.
DISADVANTAGES: 1. Changing a unit's f-o-f may be a problem because the owning player may not be able to afford the time or units necessary to perform the function. Further, in a situation of high unit density, it is easy to change the facing of a unit inadvertently—we've found that a side record with written facings is sometimes necessary to avoid dispute. An interesting addition to this rule is to have the facings *secretly recorded,* to be disclosed when the unit first fires.

2. It becomes mandatory to support artillery positions with infantry and to guard the flanks so that key positions will not be rendered ineffective by a fast-moving assault.
NOTE: This rule should be employed carefully, as it can seriously impair the balance of a scenario. In ''Omaha Beach'', for example, the Germans do not have enough vehicular units to turn their guns once the Allies have overrun the artillery positions and moved to the interior. The heavy guns become virtually useless in the crucial closing turns. In addition to this, the facing requirements can create serious gaps in the invasion front coverage. Despite the obvious realism of this rule, it should be employed only after a careful scrutiny of the consequences. It can be a severe handicap to both sides, especially in a mobile offensive.

Smoke Shell Concentrations. Rule: (H) and M class artillery may fire smoke shells, which obscure vision for two turns.
ADVANTAGES: 1. SSCs can protect advancing units from all forms of direct fire.
2. Inhibit enemy spotting for indirect fire, thereby subjecting his indirect fire to scatter.
3. Protect units doomed to die in spotted positions. This can only be used on rare occasions when a player has enough artillery to fire smoke with impunity.
4. This rule may be used with striking effectiveness in conjunction with ''split-move''. An alert player can create unspotted terrain for his units in open terrain. An opponent once used this combination to advance and eventually take Volle in ''Omaha Beach'', and I could never use opportunity fire as his armored units jumped from one SSC to the next.
DISADVANTAGES: 1. The number of factors required to create smoke (25) can often be used elsewhere to better effectiveness and more destructive purposes.
2. Graphically, a playing area cluttered with coins can upset the attractiveness of play as well as the conduct of play itself. At one time, my son took all his pennies back, and my opponent and I found a smoke-free board the next evening when we sought to complete play. It was almost as hectic as the cat eating the counters.

In summation, players should cautiously select the optional rules they employ for a given scenario, and then only after seriously weighing the consequences of what they have chosen. For example, ''The Encirclement of Nancy'' is a very even scenario if ''split-move'' is employed; if opportunity fire is used, however, German chances of victory are reduced to about 5%. Thus optionals can ruin the continuity of a situation just as easily as they can balance it.

UNITS AND THEIR CAPABILITIES

If the units represented in *PANZER LEADER* are not totally realistic, they do capture the *flavor* of the period and the opportunities available in a combined arms engagement in varied terrain. I do not seek to analyze weapon-target relationships or peruse the advantages of one unit over its enemy counterpart. Rather, I seek to compliment *PL* designers on the remaining three (the other being the aforementioned indirect fire) admirable qualities of the game which make it my favorite and which will allow it to remain a favorite to all of us.

The increased capacity of *PL* to cover engineering functions is a true strength of the game. The engineer units themselves are no longer confined to the close assault attack role, but now can clear minefields, create and remove blocks, and demolish and build bridges. Special engineering vehicles in the Allied force pool give some glee to the game: the Sherman flail devours minefields, the Valentine bridgelayer makes its own road across streams, and

the Churchill Flame, the granddaddy of all amusement toys, allows the Allied player to toast pesky German infantry as they creep forward to close assault.

PANZER LEADER also takes air power into account, and not since *RICHTHOFEN'S WAR* do we have a plane counter actually representing a single airplane, even though the rules suggest that their use is an abstraction. The part that everyone remembers about airpower is the big KA-BOOM!, the bombs or the rockets of the P47 or Typhoon fighters. Players also remember the observation powers of the puny L5 craft for spotting. Yet the forgotten force is the strafing machine gun, usable four times by each plane. All too often, players withdraw their aircraft after the bombing or rocket runs are over, the machine gun ammo saved for fighter-to-fighter combat that will never occur in the scope of the game. Five planes, especially the P-47s, can create a great deal of consternation within Nazi artillery positions, and a few Typhoons can effectively harass halftracks and weakly defended cities. This untapped wealth is another high point of *PL*.

And finally, there is that part of PL which will endear it to me always—the amphibious landings. These capture the excitement of unknown force commitment, even though Allied attack channels will be obvious after the German deploys his forts, blocks, and minefields. When the invaders arrive, they arrive inverted so that there is mystery, at least inquisitiveness, for the German: he fires at enemy units without ever knowing what they are. For the Allies, there is also the tension of rolling to see if the amphibious tanks survive. But for both players, there is the setup, or pre-game plan which incorporates almost half the game itself. An error here could mean a decisive loss. For the German, it is positional defense, artillery emplacement, and how to channel the Allied attack; for the Allies, it is coordinating an entire landing beforehand. And if players wish to add a touch of the dare to mystery, minefields can be deployed secretly; *that* is really a kick!

ACTION: THE SCENARIOS

PANZER LEADER is rich in that commodity which has been flooding the market of late: variety. Due to the wide range of orders of battle and myriad mapboard configurations, the simulation should rarely become a bore, especially with the further opportunities inherent in the macro-game and Roy Easton's several *General* variants; the avenues really are endless.

It is a simple matter to sit down with a friend and push counters around good-naturedly; it is another thing to grow to know a game well, and still another to *play* it well. I am still a newcomer to the hobby (seven years experience), but I play two games well and I feel this is as many as any of us except those who "live" the hobby will ever do. To know a game well, one must develop an empathy for it without becoming fanatical. He must learn to participate with the game vicariously, but still look upon it as the simulation it is. In reaching this point with *PANZER LEADER,* I've made some discoveries and judgements worth mentioning.

Though some scenarios are highly slanted toward a single side, a sprinkling of optional and experimental rules may smooth things out a bit. There are enough scenarios and options available to offer something to everyone: the static defender, the mobile defender, the aggressor, the connoisseur, the finesse artist, the mad bomber, and yes, even the sadist and the masochist. Generally, some judgements can be made concerning each scenario and these are necessarily subjective in

nature. By this time most players will have formed prejudices of their own toward the situations; I will add mine to the list, probably meeting disagreement at each step. This is the fate of the turtle; he sticks his neck out wherever he goes.

I have arbitrarily divided *PL's* twenty scenarios into five groups: S&M; Interesting Briefly; Mobile Defense or Blocking Action; Mystery; and Slaughterhouse Five. These names do not have attractive military origins, but they do have something to do with the type of action represented and the flow of play, and they reflect to a degree the tastes of the player involved. These groups transcend the boundaries of size, unit density, time, etc. They concentrate more on what benefit we as players receive when playing the game.

S&M as you've accurately predicted, stands for sadism and masochism. One guy always butchers the other, and even when inept players are at work, the outcome is painfully the same. The first of these is "The Reichswald" (6) in which the Allies slog halfway across board D, being ripped to shreds by indirect fire, while trying to conquer Nece, which is stacked so high with German infantry that it looks like a '43 infantry division's ten year reunion. (For an in-depth look at this situation, see *Panzerfaust and Campaign #76.*) The second *S&M* situation is "Prelude: The Saar" (12), in which the German player can win a marginal victory during his movement phase of turn three. This *S&M* group is reserved for those who want to get even with snobbish, uneducated winners who like to rub in their victories, or those who like to attempt the impossible like climbing the Matterhorn in roller skates, or swimming the English channel in an iron lung.

Interesting Briefly refers to those scenarios that are playable, but which offer few opportunities for tactical skull-duggery and finesse, except in showing how well you can shift stacks to get good CAT odds. Generally, these occur on a single board or less and have a low unit density, light of armor and heavy of footsoldiers. There are many unique properties to these situations; however, sameness sets in rather early no matter how many optional and experimental rules are used.

"Marieulles" (8) is balanced, but so much so that it often becomes a draw. "Operation Market: Nijmegen" (9) promises an Allied victory if he attacks anywhere in force, especially when he uses the Valentine bridgelayer to set the vanguard of his penetrating armies in the enemy's lap. Nijmegen offers the defensive player an excellent opportunity to defend Grancelles and presents many headaches in trying to control a stream thirty-three hexes long with mobile units capable of patrolling only half of that. The scenario captures the flavor of the river assault that actually took place during the real battle, catching the Germans offguard and securing a vital bridgehead. The lack of German engineers depicts the idiotic order from the German high command not to destroy the bridge.

"Operation Market: Arnhem" (10), too, captures the flavor of fighting that characterized the most exciting and heroic action of *A Bridge Too Far.* Allied forces are doomed by any coordinated German offensive. It is always interesting to see how long the Allies can hold out, but I've never seen Panzergruppe Harzer do worse than a tactical victory.

Moving away from Market-Garden to the Bulge, in "Bastogne: Prelude" (16) the Panzer Lehr once again gets to tromp all over someone. Typically, the Allies sweep into Artain, get smashed back, and spend the closing moments of the game trying in vain to retake a city holding another one of those ten year reunions. And finally, "Remagen Bridge" (20) completes the group. Due to the block clearing process, the outcome of the game is nor-

mally decided on the fifth turn. Since removing the block is the key to Allied victory, if an engineer has not moved adjacent by turn five, it becomes impossible to win. For those of us who like quickies, this one is a beauty. There are only twenty-five counters in the entire game, and victory can be determined sometimes in the span of thirty minutes.

Mobile Defense or Blocking Action refers to those scenarios where one force seeks to slow the opposing force down so much that the game ends before the aggressor's victory conditions can be met. Both forces are mobile enough to create a highly fluid front that provides endless variety and myriad possibilities for tricky maneuvering and shifty finesse. These situations have a remarkable lack of indirect fire effectiveness due to the fluidity of the front and the ensuing difficulty in accurately predicting correct attack hexes. Several scenarios could be included in this group, but only three appear to belong to it purely. As it works out, these are in my opinion among the finest in *PANZER LEADER.*

"St. Lo" (4) is one of two situations using two boards placed end-to-end, though one of them is just a starting area for the Allies. "St. Lo" offers some interesting problems to both sides: the Allies have alternate sets of victory conditions; Allied forces are clearly dominant, but lack the carriers to deliver any infantry punch until the game is half over; the playing area, due to terrain (board A) is often too narrow, since a normal German defense can make the Allied attack channel a single hex wide in places; the German's plethora of infantry promise a bloody defense of Grancelles (a key to victory), so each force must take care to minimize losses in the early going. This one usually yields an Allied victory when I play, but the advantages sway back and forth in an exciting arrestive counterplay until the games end. This is a fine situation.

The next is "The Encirclement of Nancy" (7). This one, another of my favorites, offers an end-to-end configuration in which Allied combatants must dash across all of board D and a third of board A to capture Grancelles in ten turns. Where "St. Lo" offered a slow mobility that built in intensity, "Nancy" offers a massive charge through mixed terrain in which at least four hexes must be gained per turn, and there are four to six turns where the Germans can hold that advance to a single hex or so. Even though the order of battle favors the Allies, the terrain favors the Germans. This situation allows the use of several tricky tactics which I'll develop later. Further, for those who think the situation unbalanced, try using all optionals except opportunity fire and artillery f-o-f limitations; then the game only slightly favors the Germans.

A third situation in this group is "Bulge: Thrust" (14). Again the order of battle favors one side (the Germans), but the terrain the other. This is the only battle in which an army is forced to cross the forest board in its length. There are some tricky tactics to be used in this one as well, yet the situation is a fair one with an Allied edge if players are willing to disallow the use of tricky tactic number 2 under "Defensive Action" below. In "Bulge: Thrust" Panzer Lehr finally meets its match. Well, nobody's perfect.

The intrigue of the *Mystery* scenarios does not indicate that the outcome is in doubt. Instead, there is something in the setup or victory conditions that make play adventurous until objectives become clearly defined through the course of play. The invasion scenarios are a natural part of this group due to the pre-planning and inverting of units.

"Utah Beach" (1) asks the Allies to record one of three objectives, before anyone sets up. This is a bit difficult for the German because he must defend all three, while the Allies suddenly magically appear

four hexes away from the chosen objective with *all* their forces. The Germans then operate a clothesline defense in hopes that the other troops can arrive in time to save the day. It is like one of those classic John Wayne westerns with the cavalry charging into the foray in the closing moments of battle but it usually has a Custer-type ending. "Omaha Beach" (2) and "Gold Beach" (3) have all the complexities of invasion covered elsewhere in this article. Both games are fun to play, though the Germans are slightly favored if they set up properly. (*Panzerfaust* No. 72 gives some sound advice in this area in "Defending Omaha Beach.")

The other scenario of the *Mystery* group is "Turning Point: Celles" (17). This is a mystery scenario because there are so many variables in the victory conditions, all involving the elimination of units and the control of the two towns on board C. For example, it is possible for each side to end the game controlling one town, but the Germans would win with a tactical victory over the Allied marginal. Unfortunately, the battle represents the true turning point in the Bulge offensives and the German forces, though powerful, cannot stand up to the Allied pinching attacks.

The final group, *Slaughterhouse Five,* includes those situations that begin with a fairly high unit density but which suffer a great deal of attrition during the course of play. These bloodbaths are fun to play: it is nice to sit back and count attack factors until the dreaded 4:1 is reached; also, there is a certain majesty when replacing an enemy tank with a flamer. There is really a great deal to say in analysis of these situations because they are high-powered slug-fests in the tradition of *PANZERBLITZ's* "Kursk." As firefights, they are unrivaled by other scenarios.

"Operation Goodwood" (5) is a massive armored engagement. Since much of the battle takes place on the clear board A, the death rate is high and quickly so, especially when the rocket-armed Typhoons come storming onto the board. It is difficult to balance the game, though; the Allies should win every time unless opportunity fire is utilized, in which case the Germans win handily (see the same setup in "Tactics" below).

"Operation Garden: Anticlimax" (11) can go either way depending on the quality of set-up and play, and upon how well the players keep track of the bookkeeping requirements. The two Allied forces cannot merge until the enemy is outnumbered on a single board by a 3:1 margin. Generally, the Germans appear to have an edge, but to be honest, I have less experience with this situation than any other.

"The Fortified 'Goose Egg' " (13) accurately lives up to its name. I don't see how the Allies can lose this one (see Tactics below), but it is funfunfun to play and rarely lasts beyond turn five unless the German player is overly cautious. Because there are so few ways to cross boards C and D in their length, the massive forces on the board clash head-on with very high attrition. In one game both sides reached decisive victory conditions for units eliminated on the same turn! Obviously, play in this one can be just as rash as it is deadly.

"Elsenborn Ridge" (15) is one of the finer situations in all of *PANZER LEADER.* The Germans have a very, very slight edge. Play is always action-packed and provocative. For a superb discussion of this one, see the Series Replay in *THE GENERAL,* Vol. 13, No. 1.

"Bastogne: Siege" (18) is a bit less bloody than the rest in this group, and though it takes longer to play than most scenarios, it is pretty well balanced. Shielded by a formidable artillery barrage (which is in turn harrassed by enemy aircraft after turn three), German forces seek to cross board C and survive on board A. Since the Allies occupy all the

unspotted terrain on board A and block most of the routes across board C, the Germans must creep forward eliminating the threat as they go and preserving enough units to meet their victory conditions. They have a free ride in the early going, but subsequent action becomes slow, cautious, and cagey when the ten P47s arrive on turn four.

And finally "Patton's Counter Offensive" (19) effectively recreates Patton's relief of Bastogne; he is unstoppable. Having a 1.6:1 advantage at the game's start, the Allies must raise that to 2:1 to win. Though play is as interesting as it is bloody, victory is almost pre-ordained. Allied forces sweep onto board C to root out and destroy the dug-in defenders while P47s harass enemy artillery positions to the rear. The timetable is luxuriously drawn out over fifteen turns so that if he likes, the Allied commander can get his 2:1 margin, and then sit back and let the Germans come to him, the pressure then being on the other side.

TACTICS

Of course no article of import of late lacks a section on tactics, either to demonstrate the obvious to those who "know" or to save others the pain of learning through experience, or simply to share ideas in the interest of fostering high quality competition. Much of this article is of a review nature, seeking to arrest interest and compliment a fantastic game, but the play's the thing! What follows is a fairly complete set of tactics that could easily be called "making the rules work for you" or "loopholes." Indeed, expert play often leans on technicalities as well as on ingenuity; this section shows some of both.

I am ignoring many common sense tactics, since these emerge quickly to all players. Things like defending in plus-one terrain or in elevated, commanding terrain are as natural as occupying the doubled terrain in strategic warfare. Even the "bluff" of screening an area lightly to suck the enemy in before crushing him in a powerful counterattack is readily perceived by gamers of early experience. Yet there are about twenty tactics that I've learned that may be of help. Many of these are applied to specific situations for purposes of illustration, but can usually be generalized to other applicable scenarios.
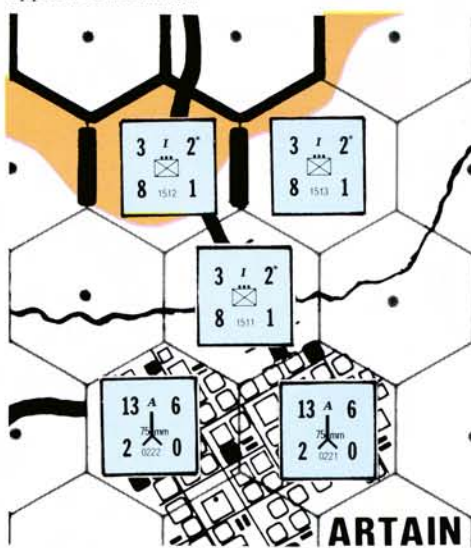

FIGURE 5—This shows an infantry defense of Artain that will last for 2-3 turns if *none* of the Allied SPAs are pushed forward to the hilltop hexes ("Encirclement of Nancy"). To break this defense in a single turn, 4:1 attacks are required on one of the two forward rifle units and on the single unit on the bridge at DBB6. Assuming that the Allies had launched 3 Stuarts, 6 M4/75s, and 3 M4/76s (the entire armored force outside of the M7s) into forward firing positions, a 4:1 can be managed only on one unit, with a 3:1 on the other; however, with the SPAs used as assault guns, 4:1 attacks could be easily managed on *all three* German defenders.

Offensive Action

1. *The SPA as an Assault Gun*—Due to the low defense factors of self-propelled artillery, these weapons are normally deployed to the rear in hidden, well protected positions. Sometimes, though, the SPA can be employed up front in much the same way as the Russian SU152 in *PANZERBLITZ.* For example, in the "Encirclement of Nancy," Allied M7s must barrel straight down the pipeline in order to roust German forces from Nece and to scare off any infantry defense on the slopes outside Artain. Figure 5 shows an effective infantry blocade at that point that only the M7s can break in a single turn. If they had been deployed to the rear for indirect fire purposes, the Allies would lose a turn in clearing the vital pathway to Grancelles.

2. *The Purposely Scattered Indirect Fire Ploy*—Sometimes it is too dangerous to leave spotting units around to make sure an indirect fire attack lands where it is supposed to. In "The Reichswald", for instance, Allied victory is dependent upon how many units they lose, so it is best to lose as few as possible. It is a dirty ploy indeed to send a Bren carrier into the German interior to act as a scout, spotting a hex adjacent to indirect firing German units (if they do not fire that turn; otherwise, the actual hex could be spotted). On the turn of plotting fire, the Bren races madly to safety, subjecting friendly indirect fire to scatter. The odds are 50% that the fire will scatter (not a bad gamble) and one in six that scattered fire will hit a single desired hex. Granted, the odds are wretched, but a desperate situation *does* dictate a desperate action, and I've had this process pay off on more than one occasion. I've also had it backfire so that I've wiped out some friends as well. When one gambles, he must be willing to accept unfavorable consequences.

3. *The Offense as Defense*—After carefully evaluating the agreed-upon optional rules, a good player will spend time maximizing his threat according to those rules. In "Operation Goodwood", for example, the German who uses opportunity fire can be an aggressively deadly force if his setup is decent. Figure 6 shows an example of German artillery and armor deployment in this scenario. In spite of the Allied 29 AFVs, few will cross the stream of board A and survive. At times, the best defense is a well-coordinated offense.

4. a. *The Old One-Two-Three*—This is the most devastating combination of attacks in the game, and somewhere along the line, you should be assured a kill. The old one-two-three is a direct or indirect fire attack, followed by an overrun, and supplemented by a close assault. A series of these, even at 1:1 odds can be as effective as a simple 4:1. Among quality players, though, it is rare that one finds the opportunity for this tactic.

4. b. *The Old One-Two-Three Sneak*—This is a variation of the above that catches an opponent off guard and can be quite demoralizing to him. By plotting indirect fire to an empty hex that you feel fairly sure will be enemy occupied on the following turn, you can catch your foe unawares. After many playings of the game, I find more and more opportunity to use this in place of the fomer tactic; experienced players just don't leave that many openings.

5. *The Enemy-Be-Damned or Hell-Bent-for-Leather Offensive Option*—In many situations it is a prime directive to capture territory rapidly, throwing caution to the wind and offering so many targets that the enemy cannot possibly capitalize on them all; and if he does, he will be countered so venomously that his chances for victory are nil. Figure 7 shows such an opening in "The Encirclement of Nancy." When an opponent sees this, he will probably shudder in agony, but if he attempts
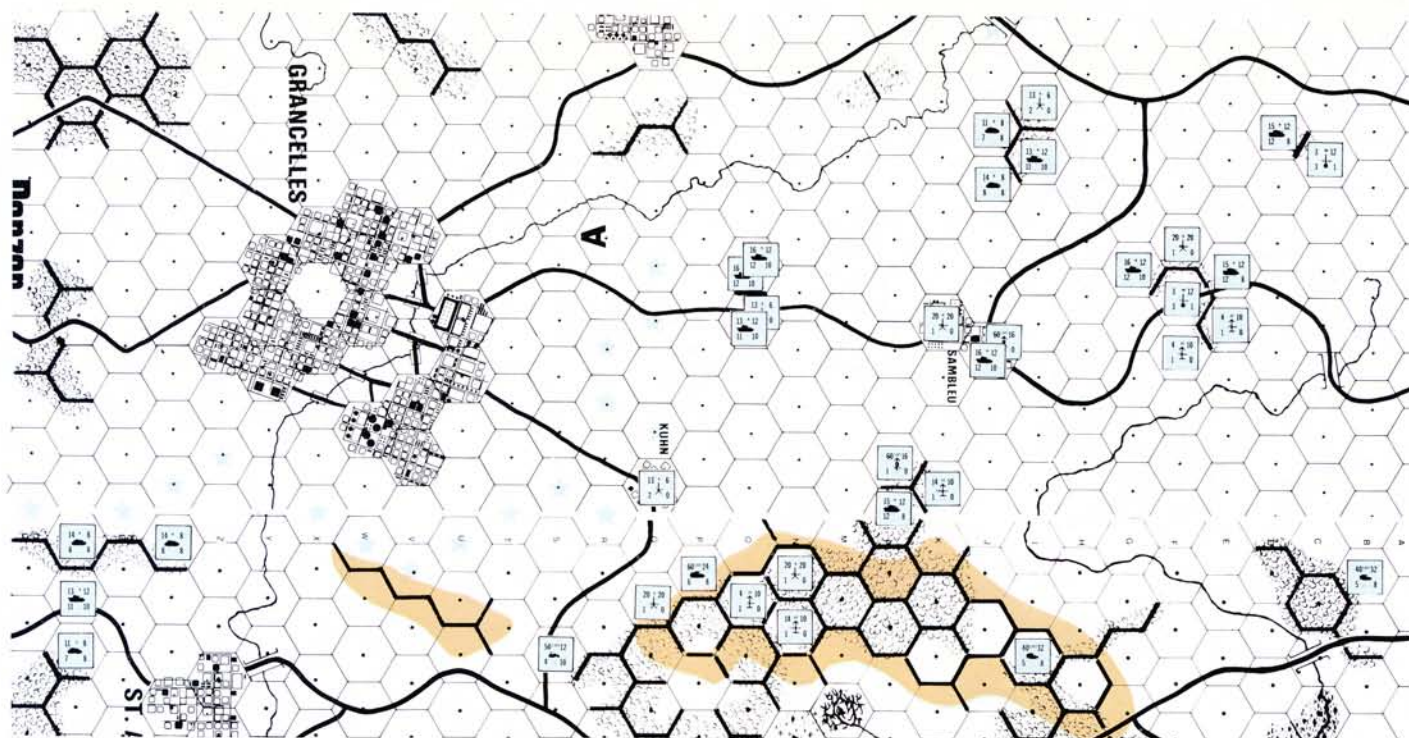
FIGURE 6—There are many acceptable German set ups in "Operation: Goodwood" when opportunity fire is used. In this one all hidden terrain east of the major stream is denied Allied units so that any attack must be painfully open. Further, the starred hexes mark the maximum advance of Allied vehicular units before the first opportunity fire attacks will take place. Due to the number of German units with a high attack factor, Allied pressure dispersed evenly along the front (channel to board C, channel from Grancelles, and the channel via bridge hex AJ2) is doomed to meet failure, for twenty-seven vehicular units could be attacked at 3:1 or 4:1 odds in a single turn. For the Allies to gain any significant foothold outside Grancelles, they must pour units through one area in such a flood as to nullify the opportunity fire threat. In the set up above, the weakest area is into St. Athan, followed by the route out of Grancelles. This is purposely done to channel the enemy into the former roundabout route or the latter wide open route. The only other acceptable strategy for the Allies is to play a cat-and-mouse game, sacrificing a few units to opportunity fire, then subjecting those hexes to fire on the next turn. If the rule is used that "A" class weapons cannot fire at muzzle flashes (THE GENERAL, Vol. 12, No. 2), the Allied cat-and-mouse tactic will surely be nullified.

to do anything about it, it is suicidal. This option is not always advisable, but it can often scare an opponent into error.

FIGURE 7—Depicting the Allied first turn in a "hell-bent-for-leather" offensive in "The Encirclement of Nancy," the German front line will be utterly devastated should they chose to stand and fight. Fifteen armored units totalling 243 attack factors (undoubled) will break almost any defense. The second line of loaded halftracks (stacked four to a hex) are unsighted and will disallow any overrun attacks by the Germans. Note: it is this same kind of front that is necessary to break the infantry defense of Artain shown in figure 5.

6. The 88 as an Anti-Personnel Weapon—In the final analysis, the optimum use of any weapon may be something quite different from what you would think. This is an example of how one can use what he has at hand to give himself an edge. In "Bulge: Thrust" the Germans have two 88s that, by the time they are unlimbered, will be ineffective in an attack on Wiln. If they are carried on to St. Athan late in the game, there will not be enough to use them to clear that city. It would appear then that those powerful weapons become (I hestitate to say it) useless baggage to the German cause. But this is not the case :

If one analyzes the Allied position, he will see that the engineer units in St. Athan can perform pre-demolition functions on the bridges, but they are unable to actually destroy the bridges until German forces have approached to within five hexes. Something must be done to harass that demolition work, and the 88s fill the bill nicely. If unlimbered on the slopes at CH7, they can ply away at the engineers with endless 3:1 attacks, guaranteeing disruption of the demolition process and giving a one-third chance of elimination. This harassment is almost mandatory, for if the Allies destroy the bridges, the Nazis automatically lose.

Defensive Action.

A great deal of quality play comes in defense. It is often easy to play decent offense by just bulling your way along and butting the opposition around; it is not that easy to defend; it takes understanding wrought from experience to know how to control the offense with well-coordinated defense. It is always a pleasure to perform a maneuver which causes the enemy commander to watch wide-eyed as his own brilliant move is negated. And it is more joyous to watch his jaw drop from the rafters when he sees the counter-brilliance of the play. The first five strategies here concern primarily the movement of pieces; the closing ten tactics are just further "devils in your pocket" to confuse the opposition.

1. Creating Blocks—Those engineers are in the force pool for more reason than just to boost CAT odds and clear minefields. Since they have the obstacle-creating function, it is good to use it whenever possible. Always analyze your defense initially to see if that option will be of particular use. In "Bulge: Thrust" such block creation will often insure a win. As an alternative, this function can be performed in lieu of destroying the bridges, slowing the German thrust to a standstill. This is also a very nasty thing to do, since you do not have to wait until the enemy is within five hexes.

2. The Wrecking Crew. Another nasty underhand gambit is to sacrifice three small ar-- mored units in a road surrounded by green hexsides. The rules prohibit the movement of any vehicle across a green hexside if the hex entered contains three counters. This is even more effective than a block because enemy engineers cannot clear the wreckage away (a block would also be effective, but never as terminal). In "Bulge: Thrust" an Allied maneuver of this sort will assure him a win by severing the Wiln-St. Athan forest road. As I mentioned previously, it is best to either put this rule aside where wreckage is concerned, or agree that the Allies will not employ this tactic. It is the only way to ensure a fair encounter.

3. The Over-Stacked Dispersal Block—Sometimes a single hex gains paramount importance in the channel of attack, as CV10 in "Elsenborn Ridge" and DBB6 in "The Encirclement of Nancy." If the aggressive armies ever occupy that single hex with a stack of four units (or three units and a block, etc.), a disruption of those units will make the hex impassable to all forces for a game turn, unless a friendly overrun attack can be arranged as a welcoming committee. When the timetable is crucial, even a 1:1 attack is an excellent gamble to take; even a 1:2 is acceptable if the situation warrants it. It is always an error to leave oneself vulnerable in this manner; as the defender, you simply exercise your privilege to show why.

4. The Solid Wall—This defense is actually a double line of friendly units and blocking terrain which halts an enemy advance in the adjacent hexes. It is best exercised in hidden terrain so that direct fire will not reduce the wall to shambles, but sometimes there will be an opportunity to exercise the tactic in the open. There are two superb examples of this defense:

The first occurs in "The Fortified 'Goose Egg' " where an Allied static defense can be developed on the C and D boards, which can be extremely difficult to break because most defenders

FIGURE 8—A sure way to stall the German offensive in "The Fortified 'Goose Egg'" is a solid wall defense on the reverse slopes of the Artain hill and in the forest and slopes near Wiln. This figure represents the German turn two movement in a face-to-face game played at GLASCON II. There are many weaknesses on both sides

which will not be discussed here, but the Allied wall can be seen to halt the enemy advance. The wall did last until the German turn five, when indirect fire blasted a hole in the Allied line at DX8 and DW8, with Wiln falling in the same turn; however, the Allies on the ensuing turn eliminated the twenty-fifth German unit, yielding a decisive

victory, and the opponents called the game. Before the breakthrough, enemy units were successively and successfully pounded by direct and indirect fire, the latter in the form of three M7s, a 155mm M1 howitzer, and an 8 inch howitzer deployed far to the rear.

are *not within* the German indirect fire radius. Figure 8 shows an example of this on the second turn of play.

The second example of this is in the "Encirclement of Nancy." Figures 9 and 10 show the Nece defense that the Allies will meet on turn two, and illustrate how the "solid wall" can become a mobile blockade to an alert player.

FIGURE 9—This represents the Allied furthest possible advance in "The Encirclement of Nancy" on turn two. The Germans are safely hidden for a time in Nece, stalling the Allied thrust with a solid wall defense. In this case, a moving solid wall is possible (see figure 10).

5. *The Stream Sneak Blockade*—Before discussing the block, it is necessary to say that the stream sneak is an offensive tactic of pushing infantry units across streams at non-bridge hexes to infiltrate enemy lines. The tactic can be easily countered by moving friendly units adjacent to the wet-footed sneakies. Since units in streams cannot attack, the infiltration is effectively foiled—no attacks, no exit.

6. *The Fortified City*—Only two scenarios use fortification counters. An excellent way to maximize the chances of German victory is to deploy the forts in the cities, since victory conditions depend upon the number of cities controlled at the close of play. A fortified city is *very* difficult to conquer because of the high defense factor, and only through repeated bombardment and subsequent close assault will a city fall.

7. *The Fortified Bridge*—A variation of the fortified city is the bridge. Since "control" of a bridge is defined as controlling not only the bridge itself but two hexes, one on either side of the bridge, it is very nasty to place a fort in an adjacent hex, especially if the hex is forested. *PL* afficionados will immediately know that I'm talking about hex BG9 in "Gold Beach." It is not good to actually fortify the bridge itself (the title is misleading), for then the fort would be exposed to direct naval fire.

8. *The Wagon-on-the-Fort Trick*—In "Omaha Beach," initial naval indirect fire can be devastating to an exposed bunker. There are 320 factors available that could hit a fort at 4:1, almost insuring a kill. But that first turn indirect fire must be programmed *prior* to any German unit deployment; therefore, if a single wagon is placed on top of the exposed position, Allied indirect fire will be

FIGURE 10—German turn two in "Nancy." In an effort to use Nece as a blockade for another turn, the German GW38 overruns the Stuart at S4, guaranteeing a disruption at 3:1 minus 2, and giving a two-thirds chance of a kill. The other GW38 does the same to the Stuart at T2 with the same results. If this overrun results in a kill, the Hetzer may overrun the third Stuart. (If this is not possible, the Hetzer simply moves to T3, giving the Allies a 1:3 attack on that hex on turn three, yielding a one in six chance of disruption.) A truck moves to V3 to seal the block, and the truck at T5 unloads and moves to U3, preventing an overrun of German forces. The play is a gambit of sorts: it sacrifices a SMG unit and risks the loss of the Hetzer, but it is worth the risk and it prevents Allied pressure on Artain until turn five.

cut in half as per the odds determination rules for indirect fire. In this manner, the wagon will be hit at a solemn 80:1, while the fort is hit with a liveable 2:1, having a single chance of elimination. This is really unrealistic, but no more so than the 2-3-6's in *STALINGRAD* that hold an entire army at bay. We must learn to make the rules work for us.

9. *The Empty Fort Ploy*—It is always a pleasure to see an enemy blast away at an empty fortress, wasting his ammunition as well as his patience. The situation arises when artillery is deployed in a carrier beside the fort and out of the enemy line of sight. This way if the fort dies on the first turn, the carrier trucks the artillery off to a new location. Be careful with this one! In one game, my fort was only disrupted, and as my 88-loaded wagon slipped into the hex, it was annihilated by naval opportunity fire. There seems to be a sneaky counter maneuver for every dirty trick.

10. *Understanding the Options*—A good player always examines the victory conditions of a situation with a hawk's eye. After much competition, new ideas will still continue to pop up and say, "Here I am." In "Utah Beach" the Allies get to choose from three objectives. Since the Germans cannot effectively defend all three, they can elect to gamble a bit by defending only *two* of the objectives, thereby giving themselves more of a defensive punch. The only problem is that the undefended hexes would be the enemy's objective, which could be a tad humbling. If the German commander likes to take a long shot, he can almost assure a win if he defends a single objective and his guess turns out to be correct. How lucky are you?

11. *Channeling*—It is possible to force the enemy to move where it suits you best, to mold his attack and lead him into traps as if you had a hand in controlling his forces. There is always this factor in a solid defensive set up, but even a fluid engagement can be changed radically. In "St Lo" for example, the Allies have a choice of victory conditions. They must either capture all of Grancelles, or they must capture half of that city and all of the other cities on board A (Caverge, Kuhn, and Sambleu). Caverge can be easily conquered, but Kuhn and Sambleu lie well behind enemy lines.

Since the Allies needn't declare an objective, they can change their minds at any point, according to the opportunities which present themselves during play. It is, therefore, in the best German interest to choose his enemy'e victory conditions for him by channeling his attack and defending in force.

By beginning the game with the German engineer deployed on the single bridge hex at AJ2, bridge demolition is almost guaranteed by turn four. A blocking action of any consequence will shield the engineer from attack, and just prior to blowing the bridge, blocking units can race to safety so they will not be snared in their own trap. The block itself grows simpler as time passes because the channel narrows considerably as it approaches the bridge. After the demolition, German units will reach Grancelles from the rear to bolster the city defense.

The effect of all this is that the only way the Allies can gain access to Kuhn and Sambleu, the rear area cities, is to blast through Grancelles. By blowing the bridge, the German has forced the Allies to satisfy one set of victory conditions before they have a chance to try for the alternative. Knowing the enemy's plans can make the defense much stronger.

A similar rotten trick can be performed in "Turning Point: Celles" if all German units evacuate one city and dash off to defend the second in a ploy to win a tactical victory.

12. *Increasing Defense Factors*—Many situations involve city control for victory. The rules tend to favor units defending in a city because all defense factors are combined, and the units receive the plus-one die roll bonus. Thus a stack of rifle platoons could defend at 24-32 rather than at the individual printed factor. Unless the enemy can amass a tremendous armored offensive, the city is almost invulnerable. Assuming three German rifle platoons and an engineer occupy a hex, the Allies must muster 136 armored attack factors to get a two-thirds chance of a kill. Sometimes the task is attempted with indirect fire. Using the same four units as before, 240 attack points are needed to produce a series of 4:1s. This is one of the few times that high stacks can be dreadfully effective.

13. *Minimizing the Air-Artillery Threat*—Pesky fighter bombers can put a thorn in any German setup. Often the threat can be neutralized for a time by carefully plotting artillery "pockets" that are easily defended by anti-aircraft weaponry. "Bastogne: Siege" is a great situation to give this a try. Figure 11 presents a sample pocket from this scenario. It can be attacked, but it can also be defended.

14. *Changing the Odds of Victory Through Stacking*—Again, this is a gambit of questionable nature, depending on the course of play. In "Remagen Bridge" German armored units can be sacrificed so that the Allied close assaults and block removal threat can be better countermanded. The wrecks count for stacking purposes and can seriously limit the enemy attack threat within Artain. It is difficult for the Allies to mount a serious CAT threat when they can only muster two units in a single hex. Before the situation card was corrected to include only two German halftracks, it was possible to fritter away all three on the block on the Artain Bridge, thus making it impossible for the Allies to win because an engineer must enter the hex to clear the block, and he couldn't do that since the stacking was already at max. At any rate, the technique is normally suited to a congested situation.

15. *Shortening the Game by One Turn*—This is actually not a tactic per se; it is more a *perception* of the definition of "control" as it works within a sequential movement system. Many scenarios, even the macro-game, determine victory by control, which is defined "if at least one friendly unit occupies, or is the last to enter or pass through . . ." It is normally the burden of the offensive player to capture these hexes, while the defender sits and waits for the attack to come. It should therefore be apparent after the first player's fire phase in the last turn, that if a hex in question is still occupied by enemy units, the game is over. Furthermore, on the turn prior to that, if spotting units can be eliminated or disrupted, the game ends an entire turn in advance since no attack on the victory hex would be possible. Use of "split-move" will alter the finality of this somewhat in situations like "The Encirclement of Nancy," but in those like "The Reichswald" there can be no reprieve.

AN AFTERWORD

In trying to capture the flavor of *PANZER LEADER*, the qualities that will make it stand the test of time and continue to permit its system to be enjoyed by all of us, I've come to the realization that as a person settles into a favorite game, it becomes more to him than a simple simulation. I'd use terms like "empathy", "understanding", "participating with", and "vicarious" to describe the course of play. And now I add still another: *catharsis*. Though the term is usually applied to Greek theater, it can also be applied to the dramatic action of wargaming interplay when opposing forces meet in simulated battle. ⚲
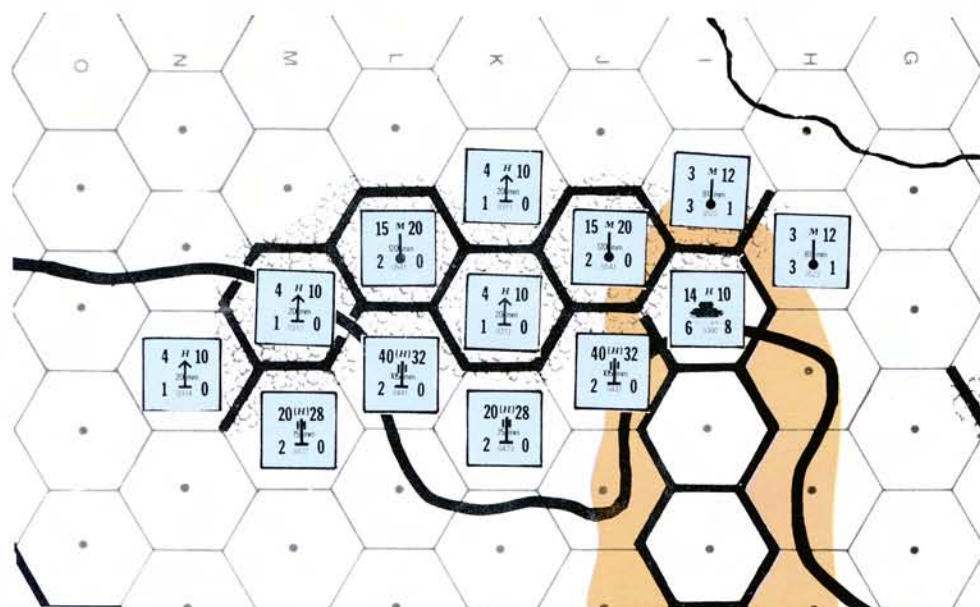

FIGURE 11—The artillery "pocket" can often minimize the threat of Allied aircraft. In this deployment, anti-aircraft weapons are positioned so that bomber attacks on the larger guns must be within half range, doubling the AA weapon's attack factors. Units are also deployed one to a hex so that multiple eliminations will not occur in a single hex. Granted, some units are deployed unrealistically, surrounded by green hexsides so that they are stuck until the end of time according to the rules, but this is necessary to keep the artillery in a concise group. There are two weaknesses to this setup: 1) Allied L5 observation craft can spot the artillery for indirect fire with a small chance of disruption (one in six); 2) in such a congested area, enemy indirect fire can be subjected to scatter and still do a great deal of harm.

THE SHIPS OF WAR AT SEA
By Kevin Duke

A Look Behind The Names On The Counters

Kevin Duke's analysis of WAR AT SEA is different from others we've seen because he plays the game with the optional hidden movement. Besides changing the play balance quite drastically, I don't care for this version because it emphasizes luck far too strongly. "What"?, you say, "he's talking about luck in Yahtzee at Sea?. For all its dice rolls, WAS is an excellent game of strategy for those who like to ponder probability. Adding the "fog of war" with Hidden Movement may be more realistic, but it reduces the German to playing a guessing game. Nevertheless, for those who disagree or wonder about the fate of the ships behind the counters, Kevin's article makes interesting reading.

WAR AT SEA may need only time to become a "classic". While very abstract instead of "realistic", it still combines ease and brevity of play with lots of excitement and may well be a gamer's most oft-played game. One of its attractions is that, though in a simple form, you have in your hands many famous ships to do with as you will. You also have many ships that aren't so famous. While we all know what happened to *Bismarck* and *Hood*, there are many other worthy stories involved with the ships of *WAR AT SEA*. While making a general appraisal of each ship's value in the game, I'll try to give a little flesh to the bones of an unfamiliar ship name.

It should be noted that I advocate using the optional rules concerning "hidden" British movement and U-boat replacements (but not the *Bismarck* reduction). With the German able to pick where the battles will be, the knowledge of exactly *what* is *where* is a large advantage. However, you will notice that, with the "Abandon Med" strategy, I think the British have the advantage. "Hidden" movement gives them yet more of an advantage, but, I still think it makes for a more interesting game. If you find the British win too frequently, you might drop hidden movement or up the Mediterranean POC to 3 (though definitely retaining the face-down British counters, for now *their* back will be to the wall.)

THE BRITISH 🇬🇧

One of the oldest principles in British warship design was that a large number of good ships was better than a few outstanding ones. With an enormous amount of sea area to defend against enemies that could pretty much pick where they wanted to attack, numbers were the answer, for they could have some ships there to battle with the enemy, with the possibility of reinforcements. This fits the British in *WAS* to a "T". While they have nothing "big and ugly" like the *Bismarck*, anywhere you stick your Axis bow you're likely to find lots of things that shoot with 4 dice. It's grim for the player on the right. For the British, while game mechanics do not allow the concept of reinforcements, this is abstractly covered in the idea that *anyone* in the sea area will be in the battle. So you must follow your historical precedent. NEVER GIVE THE GERMANS A FREE SEA. Many new players, having been mauled by a skillful German, will try to marshal a respectable force in some areas and abandon others. Making abusive remarks about cowardly "krauts" will seldom draw them to you. You can expect them to take the freebie. Indeed, with enough strength, the Axis player may take the open area and attack someplace else. The one exception to this is the Mediterranean Sea.

It will be pretty clear that I advocate the British using the "abandon Mediterranean" strategy. It isn't very historic, but then, neither is total Italian reaction, and *WAS* is a game of "What might have been" (in games where the German player is running amuck with the POC counter peaking on 10, it even seems odd to lose France to an "invasion" he has no opportunity to prevent). The British fleet spread over five seas (and perhaps mauled by the Italians) has a "sticky wicket" indeed. Dividing his fleet four ways instead of five, and dodging six (eventually eight) Italian "4s" is pretty much worth giving up two POC a turn. If you successfully stomp Jerry and the RAF whittles down two or three BBs you may go down and reckon with the "Eyties". Keep your eyes open for a chance to do it on turn three or four (like if the Germans have lost or damaged much of their fleet and aren't likely to go anywhere but the Baltic this turn) where you can either smash the Italians or at least deny them the four-in-a-row control of the Med they need to stay intact on turn eight.

THE SHIPS

Old BBs: the 4-4-3s

Keep them home. Their speed gives them only a 1/3 chance of making it two areas, and that just isn't good enough. You have lots to keep them busy in the North Sea and Atlantic so keep them busy, instead of sitting in port.

For ships that should have been retired before the war began, the "R" class had an exciting time of it. *Royal Oak* sank in Scapa Flow from Gunther Prien's *U-47* in almost the opening days of the war. She still rests there undisturbed as a war memorial. *Ramillies* did a little Atlantic escort duty before being sent to bolster things in the Pacific, where it was promptly torpedoed by a Japanese midget sub near Madagascar. It managed to survive the rest of the war quietly. *Resolution* was torpedoed by a French sub and nearly sank. *Revenge* managed to participate in the *Bismarck* chase but got there too late, and *Royal Sovereign* spent most of the war making convoy attacks dangerous for German raiders—successfully it seems, for it never saw any. Considered too small for the engine modernizations the Queen Elizabeth class got, the "Rs" represented slowly plodding batteries of eight 15 inch guns. As new battleships arrived to take their places, and the German naval threat shrank, they were retired and scrapped.

Old BBs: the 4-4-4s

Also too slow to do much travelling, but somebody has to. They have a 50-50 chance of going two seas, so it's a "Do you feel lucky?" situation. When Russia enters the game, you might "strand" a couple of these on the Murmansk run, for the Barents tends to get pretty warm when the convoys come through (or try to).

The Queen Elizabeth class battleships were commissioned in WWI (all but *Valiant* were at Jutland) and modernized into faster ships between the wars. Still obsolescent, their WWII careers ran the gamut from fabulous to awful. *Warspite* took more battle honors then any British ship in the war, showing up just about any place there was action. Crippled by glider bombs at Salerno, it still made it back in time to shell the beaches at Normandy. *Barham* backed it up in the battle (more of an execution) of Cape Matapan but was sunk in the Med by U-boats, a fate *Malaya* nearly shared, though she managed to limp back to port. *Valiant* and the *Queen Elizabeth* both saw no major action and were sunk in Alexandria harbor by Italian frogmen. *Valiant* was raised, but the *Queen Elizabeth* was too far gone.
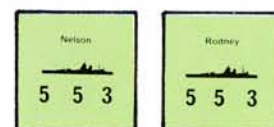
The 16-inchers: Rodney and Nelson

These 5-5-3s are the "meat" of the British line. You'd like to park them both next to *Bismarck* and then next to *Tirpitz*. In other words, where you expect the Germans to go, send these. Now the bad news. Built to strict treaty limitations these ships sacrificed speed and conventional layout in order to get the most armor and gun on a "legal" ship. The speed is a problem. Too valuable to spend any time sitting in the harbor, these ships represent the "gutsiest" speed roll the British have, and one you might not want to try.

In action, the *Rodney's* pounding of the *Bismarck* is legendary. While the German ship took nearly forever to sink, the 16 inch shells from the *Rodney* (with some notable 14 inch assistance from the *King George*) had reduced it to an armor-plated island long before then. Seeing everyone else torpedoing what was left of *Bismarck*, the *Rodney* remembered that it had one submerged tube on each side and went into Guiness as the only battleship to torpedo another battleship. *Nelson* had a less glorious career, finding a mine early in the war and an Italian aerial torpedo later on. Both ships used their 16 inch guns at Normandy, and survived the war.

If you're playing an unfamiliar opponent and have both old and new BBs in a fight, you might try to "sacrifice" the old ones where possible. Some Germans, faced with BBs doubling up on their ships, lose interest in exactly *which* BB they shoot at, as long as they're parked next to one of them. It's a slim chance, but costs nothing to try. Some may see it differently, however, for much of *WAS* centers on a ship's ability to "live" through one hit. You might want to put your "5 hit" ships in the danger spots, and the German might *want* to shoot at your "4 hit" ships on the grounds that there is less chance he'll have to shoot at them again. This is pretty much up to player preference, but don't just be impressed with a "pretty face". Consider what's going on in *this* battle and what you and your opponent will need in future battles.

New BBs: 4-5-6s

The best British combination of speed, armor and firepower, you never have enough of these, while the German is certain you have too many. They have a good chance of surviving one hit. These are the British "marines" that can be rushed to the trouble spots, and sent to relieve the "Barents Sea Patrol" that got squashed last turn. *Prince of Wales* accompanied *Hood* when they met *Bismarck* and had to move to avoid what was left of *Hood*. Being heavily damaged herself, she remembered the bit about discretion and left. After repair she went to the far east with *Repulse* and learned what the Japanese thought about gunboat diplomacy. *King George V* fought beside *Rodney* against *Bismarck*, while *Duke of York* slowed a fleeing *Scharnhorst* down enough for that ship to be sunk with gunfire and torpedoes. *Anson* and *Howe* came along after things had quieted down and saw no major sea action. These ships were armed with ten 14 inch guns, dubbed "special" at the time to drown out questions about what seemed to be a step backwards in armament. Though adequate, they were modeled after WWI guns and little different.

As much as you may have a tendency to sail these fast ships together, there is reason to use some with the old BBs that patrol close to home. While POCs are the name of the game, sinking enemy ships and/or keeping your own afloat are a big part of that. The German may stick his bow into a sea of face-down British and not like what turns over. After one round of combat, he may decide to fight another day and leave the battle. Old BBs will, except for much damaged Germans, have nothing to do but wave. The new BBs are quite useful for running down pocket battleships and damaged anythings.

Renown	Repulse	Hood
3 3 6	3 3 6	4 4 7
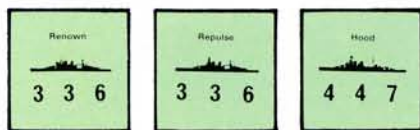
The BCs: 3-3-6s and a 4-4-7

Not quite as powerful nor as well defended as the old BBs, their speed makes them highly valuable in the early part of the game, when the British are particularly short of that commodity. These will probably patrol the Barents in those early turns when Murmansk is not in play, but they are also useful for chasing down withdrawing Germans. However, their speed and weak defense will attract a lot of fire, so enjoy them while they last.

Renown and *Repulse* spent so much time in drydock during the first war they were dubbed "Refit" and "Repair". Continually modified between the wars, they scarcely looked like sisterships in 1939. Both were involved in the fighting around Norway, *Renown* actually exchanging some "broadsides" in an inconclusive action with *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. *Repulse* accompanied *Prince of Wales* to the Pacific and subsequently to the bottom. *Renown* was involved in the *Bismarck* chase, and was the only true battle cruiser to survive the war. Both carried six 15 inchers.

With the strength of the old BBs and "go anywhere" speed, the *Hood* is likely the most valuable ship the British have. This, together with historical precedent, will see it draw fire like bees to honey. A German who sinks the *Hood* early (like on the first shot) will always make belittling remarks about the "Pride of the Royal Navy". Enjoy the *Hood* while you have it.

| Cumberland	Norfolk	Dorsetshire
1 1 7	1 1 7	1 1 7
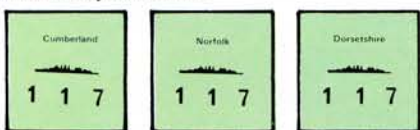
CAs: the 1-1-7s

You'll never have enough. These are your "go anywhere" ships. They "get there" without giving you ulcers but the question is can they do the job? Answer: probably. In *WAS* four cruisers are better than one battleship in several ways. While matching the gunfire of a battleship (at least at first) they take a longer time to kill because the maximum damage a hit can achieve vs. them is '2'. CAs will also be used to add on a shot or two to battleship salvos and when using the optional rules, as "dummies" where the German is left to wonder whether that tall stack is *all* cruisers or worse.

Cruiser speed is also useful when the German has decided he's had enough and chooses to leave. But, don't be too careless with your little ships. You have eight of them, but the German would be only too happy to reduce that for you. If you have several ships, it's probably a good idea to chase the enemy, but a cruiser to cruiser pursuit had best be considered for a long time, for your battle report is likely to read, "We chased the enemy, and, unfortunately, we caught them."

The "counties" show up a great deal in action reports. *Exeter* we all remember fought *Graf Spee* at River Platte, losing two out of three turrets. Despite its heroics at River Platte, the *Exeter* was not a very good design, to the point where it was said, "The *Exeter* looked like it was designed for Britain to sell to another country that they would immediately declare war on." It went down in the Battle of the Java Sea. *Dorsetshire* joined it about the same time near Ceylon. *Kent* and *Cumberland* managed to avoid any major actions, though *Cumberland* was on the "reception committee" waiting for *Graf Spee*. *Norfolk* served its time out on Barents convoy duty and joined the *Duke of York* in sinking *Scharnhorst*. *Devonshire* managed some prestigious activity, transporting the King of Norway (and the crown jewels) to England and sinking the Q-ship *Atlantis*. *Suffolk* was the first ship to sight *Bismarck* and shadowed it the whole trip. *Sussex* was bombed during refit in 1940 and sat out the next two years.

Courageous	Ark Royal	Eagle
2	3	1
0 1 6	0 2 7	1 2 4
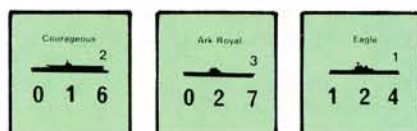
The Carriers

Carrier use in *WAS* is pretty straightforward. You always want some, but it's unwise to have more than you "need" (if the German has four ships left and you put 7 or 8 airstrikes in one sea, you have idle airplanes) and carriers that might be lost). Carriers are a thorn in the side of German players, always likely to disable (send away), sink, or damage (and thereby destroy the gunnery advantage) your ships, usually the most important ones before battle is joined. Little is more enjoyable to Axis players than to defeat the capital ships and run down the carriers (though disabling one instead of sinking it will usually cause much profanity!), while the relief to Allied folk of removing *Bismarck's* +1 is far better than Rolaids. Carriers mean death to U-boats, and even the *Eagle* gets three die (whch, together with its air strike and gunnery factor, make it a nice North Atlantic convoy escort) and more than one U-boat stack in the hidden game has swept upon a small stack of ships to "rob" a POC and found a multi-carrier trap.

Ark Royal is the best. It has the speed to get there and lots of airplanes. Use it where you can use all of it. Quite good for Barents support or if you swoop down on the Italians, but, beware. You can count on attracting airstrikes and surviving submarines. In the war, it was Britain's only "real" carrier

when the festivities began (*Glorious* and *Courageous* were conversions) and may be best known for the lucky rudder hit one of its "Swordfish" delivered on *Bismarck* that kept it from escaping. It was sunk in the Med by the same *U-81* that almost sank *Malaya*.

Courageous and *Glorious* are slower and weaker but still quite handy. The low defense factor might reflect their bad luck, for *Courageous* was sunk by *U-39* in September, 1939 (during the "phoney war"?) and *Glorious* had an even less glorious end as it actually was chased down and dispatched off Norway by *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.

Illustrious, *Victorious*, and *Formidable* are a bit stronger and a bit faster and can team up with the cruisers for a guaranteed-to-get-there force to support anything in the Barents or Med. All three survived the war. *Illustrious* was part of the devastating attack at Taranto, *Formidable* was at Cape Matapan (her planes made the hit that stopped *Pola* and started that series of events). *Victorious* was part of the "chase the *Bismarck*" force. All three were sent to the Pacific eventually.

Eagle is a sentimental favorite with many and a contemptible mongrel with others (mostly stung Germans). It was built on a hull intended as a battleship for Chile, which may somewhat explain giving it a fire factor for nine 6 inch guns. Still, it makes things interesting. *Eagle* did a lot of duty ferrying fighters to Malta before being sunk by *U-73* in mid-42.

THE GERMANS

Why Hitler, land animal that he proclaimed himself to be, went along with building big expensive ships is a mystery. Obtaining the treaty to be *able* to was a diplomatic victory, but actually doing so may have been a blunder. Still, with the force he had the Germans posed a moderate threat to the "English lifeline" (though, historically, the English have regarded other countries' canoes as threats to their lifeline.) Hitler claimed he couldn't sleep when the capital ships were at sea, though you wouldn't think he'd have lost much sleep as infrequently as that happened. *Tirpitz* fired its guns offensively only to bombard the defenseless base at Spitzbergen. Mostly, the German ships sat in port and had bombs dropped on them. As the German commander, you have to keep the British off-balance—if at all possible. Use oilers, France, U-boats, sleight-of-hand, or anything else you can think of to keep from spending the game blockaded, facing tall stacks of ships in the North and Barents Sea.

Many consider *WAS* to be balanced slightly (or more than slightly) in favor of the Germans. I disagree. Mind you, I enjoy playing the Axis (it being more interesting to direct the game rather than to "divvy" up the fleet and wait for "them" to come to you) but I think the Germans have to be lucky. The problem is, you're playing an opponent who is only too happy to trade losses with you, ship for ship. You need to "dodge" his first salvo and blow him away with yours. If you can inflict casualties early, keep your fleet intact, and avoid being blockaded, you can indeed stretch the Royal Navy thin and defeat them in detail. But, you'll undoubtedly note that is a lot of "ifs". You need an early lead, as the convoys represent some quick points for the end game. The German that wins a sea on turn one at the cost of both BCs and a couple of others will have a rough time of it. Remember, the British have a history of losing battles and winning wars.

THE SHIPS

Bismarck 4 9 6 **Tirpitz 4 9 6**
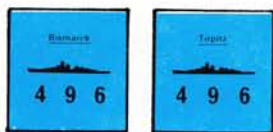
BBs: the 4-9-6s

Bismarck and *Tirpitz* are the bogey men of *WAR AT SEA*. Some feel the nine defense factor is too high. However, despite countless torpedo hits and *Rodney* and *KG5* pounding away at 2000 yards, there are reports that *Bismarck* was actually scuttled to prevent boarding. Either way, it took an enormous amount of damage. *Tirpitz* was the focal point of *22* planned attacks, including carrier planes, midget subs, and heavy bombers with special bombs. In game terms, these are your main punch. The British may likely ignore other ships to make sure of sinking these. With them, you have a threat, without them, it's only a matter of time. Your gunnery advantage is very important, as you need to blow away your opposition before you get hurt. Only in rare cases, then, should you sail into battle when damaged.

If this is a stay home and bandage the fleet turn, sail everybody who isn't being repaired into the Baltic. The Britisher might send the RAF after even one or two damaged ships. He will certainly send them after more if you give him a selection. The British player finds the German gunnery advantage loathsome, and will not pass up a chance to take it away from you. This is one of the key differences. You hate to put "one hit" of damage on his ships, where he feels pretty good whenever he manages to do the same to you. He'd like to sink you, but that one hit represents one turn when you either won't sail, or will face him on "equal" terms, and you know what the British consider "equal". Most navies had adopted the "all or nothing" armor principle, where vital areas were heavily armored and less vital ones armored not at all. The Germans stayed with the old "armor everything" principle. Though hard to sink, they were far too easy to knock out of action.

Scharnhorst 3 5 7 **Gneisenau 3 5 7**

BCs (?) the 3-5-7s

No one is sure how to class *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. Battle cruisers generally sacrificed armor for speed and armament. These two sacrificed armament for speed and armor, carrying "fleet in being" all the way. Perhaps as raiders they were well suited to pummel cruiser escorts and stay protected from damage when far from base, but they had little or no chance against a full battleship, as the *Scharnhorst*'s demise demonstrated. *Gneisenau* had perhaps the most ignoble end of all—she was scrapped, with two turrets going to defend the Norwegian coast and one to Denmark.

Lutzow 2 2 5 **Graf Spee 2 2 5** **Admiral Scheer 2 2 5**

BBs: the "pockets"

Classed as "armored ships" these cruisers were not a bad design as raiders. Intended to destroy anything that could catch them and run from anything that could hurt them, the action at River Platt debunked that. Two light cruisers and a marginal heavy cruiser (six 8 inch guns) put the hurt

to the *Graf Spee*. *Lutzow* and *Scheer* did a little raiding, (but only a little) before succumbing to the sit-in-port-and-be-continually-damaged by airplanes disease. Perhaps they would have been more useful as regular cruisers.

As the slowest German ships, these are the ones that stand the least chance of making it two seas. Should you feel strong enough to attack someplace else and want to get a "freebie" POC for the Baltic, use one of these.

Admiral Hipper 1 2 7 **Blucher 1 2 7** **Prinz Eugen 1 2 7**

CA: the 1-2-7s

Good but overworked. They often end up having to slug it out with battleships, a habit with dim prospects. Like the British, the Germans would love to have more of these (but, the Germans would love to have more anything.)

Historically, *Blucher* goes on the list of unlucky ships. Committed to the Norway expedition before fully shaken down, she entered a harbor thinking the defenses had been silenced by troops. They weren't. Land-based torpedoes gave **Blucher** a demise that was, at least, unique. *Hipper* had chronic engine trouble and spent most of the war tinkering with that. *Eugen* made several good raids, survived the war *and* the Bikini atoll test, and was put to sleep.

**Graf Zeppelin 2 / 1 2 8**

CV: the 1-2-8

Graf Zeppelin never quite made it, though why is a complicated matter. Much of it hinges on the fact that Goering demanded that anything that flew came under Luftwaffe jurisdiction. Hitler questioned the value of a carrier, but later ordered his capital ships to *never* sail into opposition if the British *might* have carriers. The *Zeppelin* was kind of on again-off again throughout the war, and was perhaps 90% finished. The Russians took it as reparation and loaded it so full of other "reparation" that it sank in a storm on the way to Russia. It is the fastest ship in the game, and needs to be. The British prove remarkably unwilling to let anyone else have carriers. One troublesome question that might arise is whether to commit the **Zepp** to the surface battle after the air attacks are over. If there are lots of British, you might not have to trouble long over this, as they will most certainly come after you. If you *do* have a choice, consider it carefully. You might try adding its shot to someone elses' except that the Britisher will most likely want to switch targets from somewhere to insure shooting at your only carrier. What it boils down to is what part of the game you are debating. If it's the last turn, there is little cause for thought, for that is all or nothing time, something to keep in mind the farther the game goes along. Weigh the point spread. Do your math carefully on the last couple turns. You may be able to let the convoy through and still win by denying POC with U-boats and sailing into the Baltic, for example. *WAS* is one of the few games wherein victory is occasionally clearly predictable. Do your adding and subtracting, and grin devilishly if you can sail out of reach and win by one point.

Oilers

The ships without counters, and, therefore, often forgotten. They give the Germans the

possibility of extreme mobility early in the game, and may give you that vital "early lead". You'd better get an early lead, too, for if you're behind when the convoys start coming, you'd better start thinking about the next game.

I haven't dealt with individual German ship strategy, because there is little. The Germans are like a big happy family—they like to go everywhere together. *WAR AT SEA* gives the descendants of the High Seas Fleet their dream come true—they get to attack a portion of the British fleet with everything they have. They should not let the opportunity slip by.

U Boat 1 0 ✳
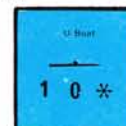
U-boats

The German ace-up-the-sleeve. Beginners often parcel them out one or two at a time and they get smashed to no end. If you accumulate them until you have a chance of survival, you can "rob" POCs, break blockades, and maybe even hurt a ship or two. They are also useful if the Russians sail and you don't want to disperse your force by sending ships there, but sure don't want to give the Allies the two POC.

As a review of the British losses reveals, the U-boats made themselves felt by the Royal Navy. The convoy vs. wolfpack story is well-known and the wolfpacks certainly came out on the losing end. In game terms, the convoy, usually accompanied by a few ships and a carrier or two, is usually too tough a nut to crack for U-boats.

THE ITALIANS

The Italians have a nice big fleet with a number of nice big ships that often do nothing but make nice big targets for an RAF that has nothing else to do. This is more than a little frustrating when "up north" the Axis is thinking about arming fishing boats. Some British will swoop down on the Italians after there are little or no Germans left, but, aside from revenge, the Axis generally has little to gain by this. Still, the two POC and the Italian defection may prompt some Britishers to send a "smash-them-once-and-be-done-with-it" force, particularly if the Germans are weak and blockaded. The Italians might play "fleet in being" and not sail, but they are usually so tired of doing nothing that the chance to inflict damage is a strong temptation.

The Italian Navy did not build a very impressive reputation during the war. In game terms, their "shooting" is just as good as the British, though a string of misses will often give rise to rude remarks by one or both players. But, such is the attraction of "beer and pretzels" gaming.

THE SHIPS

Fiume 1 1 7 **Zara 1 1 7** **Pola 1 1 7**
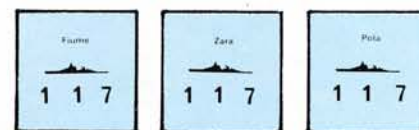
CA: the 1-1-7s

These are the Italian "gnats" that can leave the often abandoned Med and give some aid to the Germans, who need it. They are gnats only compared to the German ships though, and they can be quite useful at "back-dooring" the British, but if they try it alone, there may be no more "gnats". They did not fare well in the war either. At Cape Matapan, *Pola* was stopped dead in the water by aerial torpedoes. *Zora* and *Fiume* went back to help

after dark, and were found by *Warspite* and *Barham* at close range. Then there was one. *Gorizia* spent much of the war repairing torpedo damage. Captured by the Germans after the capitulation, it was sunk by Italian frogmen, this time on the other side.

Andrea Doria	Giulio Cesare	Caio Duilio
4 3 5	4 3 5	4 3 5

Old BBs: 4-3-5s

These modernized WWI ships are a little hard to classify, for they come out like light battleships or slow battle cruisers. While not great ships, there are lots of them. *Di Cavour* was sunk and *Cai Duilio* damaged at Taranto. *Doria Cesare* was the only one to see a major action, and that the inconclusive Calabria. *Cesare* and *Duilio* were both surrendered. All had ten 12.6 inch guns.

Vittorio Veneto	Impero	Roma
4 6 6	4 6 6	4 6 6

New BBs: 4-6-6s

Excellent ships. The two that the Italians begin with are largely responsible for the British reluctance to tangle with the Med, while the two they get late in the game can make the end interesting.

Littorio was sunk at Taranto but raised in time to see action in the second battle of Sirte. *Vittorio Veneto* was damaged at Cape Matapan and saw several small actions. Both, together with the not quite complete *Impero*, surrendered. *Roma* was commissioned just in time to surrender but, on the way to Malta, she was hit by a "mistleto" radio-controlled bomb and sank. In defense of the Italian Navy, the smaller vessels—destroyers, torpedo boats, and the like—fought with great gallantry, often against heavy odds. One foul-up for the Italians was Mussolini's insistence that the Med islands would be Italy's "aircraft carrier". As you can't sink an island, it might not have been a bad idea, had not the Air Force controlled all the planes, for Italy was mired in the same kind of bureaucratic rivalries that Germany was.

MINOR NAVIES

Referring to the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. as "minors" seems a bit odd, but in *WAR AT SEA*, such is the case. They total eight ships that you have little or no control of. The Allied player is at the mercy of the die rolls, with his only options being the nearly inconceivable act of *not* sailing some of the American ships that have been "released". The American ships really do help, for they uphold their historic function of freeing British ships to go elsewhere. The Russians are good only for unpredictable nuisance raids. The Germans can steal the POC with a U-boat or two, or, if he's lying low this turn, may send ships in to "remove" the problem, though enormous cackling will take place should the Russians manage to sink (or even damage) a German ship.

AMERICANS

The Americans are, frankly, your most expendable ships. The Germans might not bother them at all in the North Atlantic, but, if they do, use them as much as you can. Put them in the front line of battle and give them every possible shot. It's likely to be rather late in the game, and this is no time for conserving people who may not get another shot. If you run the Germans out of the North Atlantic,

pursue with anything you have. It may seem suicidal (and probably is) to pursue several Germans with *Wichita*, but it should be considered, particularly if German U-boat strength is weak (where the lost ASW attack would not be missed as much). That extra die roll could damage (or even sink) a ship when things are coming down to the wire.

The *Washington* was commissioned in 1942. It began escorting convoys in the Atlantic, and even went into the Barents a couple times. Modernized in 1943, it went to the Pacific and helped sink the *Kirishima* in Iron Bottom Sound.

Texas came out in 1914 and nearly became an "incident" in June, 1941 when it was attacked by a U-boat near Greenland. It escaped to be used for shore bombardment in North Africa and Okinawa, and now rides in harbor as a tourist attraction/memorial in Houston. *New York* was also commissioned in 1914 and modernized somewhat. It also rode shotgun on some convoys, and did shore bombardment duty in the North Africa, Italy, Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns.

Tuscaloosa served as FDR's "yacht" for two trips in the thirties, and saw action in the North Atlantic, Southern France, and the Philippines. *Augusta* was one of the few American ships to actually fire on what was left of the French Navy during the North Africa landings, and also bombarded Normandy and Southern France. *Wichita* began in the Pacific, but came east in time to bombard North Africa and become one of the few American ships to be *struck* by French shore fire. It then went back to the Pacific.

RUSSIANS

Okt. Revolutia	Marat
R	R
3 3 3	3 3 3
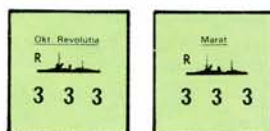
Dreadnoughts

The *Marat* and the *Oktiabrskaya Revolutia* (now you know why they abbreviated the title on the counter!) were old ships dating back to the days of the Czar, intended to be scrapped as unworthy of the soviet nation and kept only after it was noticed that there wasn't much of anything else that floated. They served primarily as shore bombardment ships in the areas around Leningrad, and did a good job of it. In *STUKA PILOT* Hans Rudel claims personally sinking the *Marat*, while the Russians, with their interesting idioms, list it as "damaged by aircraft and later raised." The *Revolutia* played "one-man fleet in being" for the better part of the rest of the war, aided by some of the most concentrated anti-aircraft fire in history situated around Leningrad harbor, where every available space, including the concrete submarine net floats, had AA guns.

Convoy 1A	Convoy 2B	Convoy 3C
1 3 3	1 3 3	1 3 3
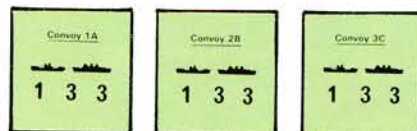
CONVOYS

Undoubtedly the most important pieces in the game, convoys represent a possible NINE Points of Control to an Allied player who normally gets points one at a time. Protecting them or sinking them will dominate the players' attentions the last half of the game. With escort carriers and other ships, U-boats seldom live long enough to get a shot at one, and it often falls to the Luftwaffe to succeed or fail, for, unless the Allies have been thoroughly mauled, they will mass unbeatable strength to escort

A SHIP BY ANY OTHER NAME

Some of the names of the ships of War At Sea are familiar as historical figures, places, etc., but many are not. Here then, are the who, what, and where of the names (though I'll skip the Americans, since if you don't have any idea what *Texas* and *Wichita* come from you're beyond my help).

BRITISH

Most of the British ship names have been British ship names for a long time. It's part of the tradition. There was a *Royal Oak* at Trafalgar (the name makes more sense, doesn't it?) as well as a number of others in the game. The oldest name in the game is the *Revenge*, the tenth ship of that name going back to 1575. *Eagle* takes the prize for repetition (the 20th, going back to 1592) but that's only for *WAS* participants. During the same period there was a gunboat named *Falcon*, the 28th ship of that name, going back to 1212. Nelson, Rodney, Hood, Anson, and Howe were all admirals during the age of sail though *Anson* and *Howe* were originally named *Beatty* and *Jellicoe*. An Admiral Hood also died at Jutland when his inaptly named BC *Invincible* blew up. Fate has a grim sense of humor.

GERMANS

The German capital ships were all named after historical figures from all over Germanic (not just German) history. With little naval heritage, it isn't surprising that there were people with little or no connection to the sea. We remember Bismarck as the Iron Chancellor. Tirpitz created the High Seas Fleet, and might well have changed history had not Kaiser Bill decided he wanted to play with his ships himself.

Those who play Waterloo remember Blucher, the Prussian leader. His cavalry commander there was Lutzow (the ship was originally named *Deutschland*, but Hitler feared the morale drop if "Germany" was sunk, which rather explains why no ship was named Adolph Hitler) and August von Gneisenau organized the Prussians' orderly retreat at Ligny (give him credit for the arrival of the 4th corps). Gerhard Scharnhorst organized the Landwehr and rebuilt the Prussian army after the collapse at Jena. Prince Eugene of Savoy (*French* born) served with the Austrian army and is credited with stopping the Turkish threat to Europe. Hipper, Scheer, and Spee were WWI admirals, Spee commanding (and dying with) the East Asiatic Squadron and the other two staying closer to home. Count Zeppelin we remember from the big silver cigars.

ITALIAN

The Italian old BBs were historical figures. Guilio Cesare needs only his latin Julius Caesar to be familiar. Cai Duilio is better known as the Roman *general* Caius Duilius, who defeated the Carthaginian fleet by grappling the ships together and pretending it was a land battle. Andrea Doria was a ship captain, credited with inventing tacking, who freed Genoa from the Spaniards. Conti Di Cavour was a journalist, minister, and rabble-rouser who aided Garibaldi in unifying Italy.

For the new BBs, Vittorio Veneto was the site of the last decisive battle to drive out the Austrians at the end of WWI. Littorio was Mussolini's first big land reclamation project (*ANZIO* players might remember the Bonifica Pontine swamp.). Roma and Impero (Emperor) are pretty straight-forward. The cruisers are all towns in an area Italy took from Austria-Hungary after WWI, in what is now Yugoslavia.

the convoys to Murmansk. Keeping this in mind, the German player should keep open the options of attacking someplace else when the tall stacks ride in the Barents, for control of any other sea will cancel out the convoy points. With the Med, possibly the Baltic, and U-boats robbing a POC somewhere else, the Germans may stay even or gain a point at a time when the Allies might well need lots of them.

LAND-BASED AIRPOWER

Probably the most cursed counters in the game. You curse your opponents when they are successful and your own when they are not. A curious thing happens when the British abandon the Med. The airplanes lose a large part of their significance. Unless the Germans stay in port, the RAF has little to do but try to whittle-down the Italians, perhaps with no purpose, while, the Luftwaffe has little place to go but the Barents, a place less attractive to the Germans because of its low point value. Often the airplanes end up with nothing but "turkey shooting" secondary to a major sea battle elsewhere. Knowing this, you might as well make the most of it. Many players attack the best ships in an area. This may not be the best idea. Best often means strongest, and damaged ships have a way of coming back later. British turkey shooting in the Med might better focus on the cruisers, which he may face elsewhere, or the old battleships, which he has a 50/50 chance of sinking with one hit. German Barents planes might focus on the battle-cruisers or, more enjoyable, the carriers, though once the British gets a retinue on the Murmansk run, that *has* to return where the repair facilities are poor, it might be humorous to give him a string of damaged ships

GETTING IT
OFF MY CHEST DEPT.

Are you one of many who enjoy *WAR AT SEA* and tire easily of those who continually cry, "not realistic!"? I am. Take the rules to one of these perceptive types and read him the introduction, placing added stress on the lines which read, "simple simulation . . . only in the broadest sense . . . based loosely on certain historical facts . . . dismisses much attention to detail . . . IS NOT REALISTIC AS A NORMAL. . . WARGAME. . . The result is a highly *playable*, and *easy* game which is *fun* to play." Smile sweetly and ask, "Are you illiterate or do you just not believe Avalon Hill?"

I don't mind attempts at variations about nearly anything, and we have seen a number of *WAS* variations on these same pages. But, most of them feel a need to justify themselves by saying. "The game is not realistic." Richard Bauer's "Tournament" game is an example of the end product, with a sequence of play with 9 phases and 26 segments. I rest my case. Those who persist in decrying an enjoyable game may go and tinker with chess, *Monopoly*, or crazy eights.

THE ASYLUM, No. 5
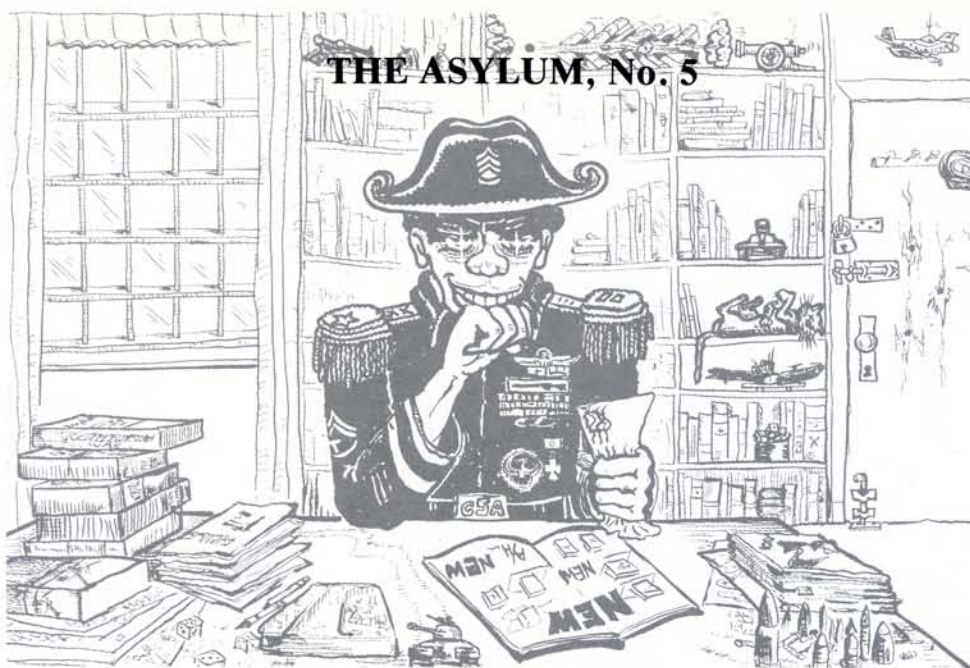
DER FUHRER By Alan R. Moon

"I'm leaving now dear", she yells from the door.

"Okay, don't spend too much money", you yell back.

You listen. The car engine starts. You peek out the window. She's backing out of the driveway. You cringe as she just misses the garbage can. Easy. Make sure. Watch till she's out of sight. Wait. Gone!

The attic. In a dark corner, the package you picked up at General Delivery yesterday. Ahhh, General Delivery. The man who invented General Delivery must have been a man much like yourself. You can have your packages delivered there, pick them up in the morning, and bring them home at lunchtime while she's at work.

The package seems slightly mussed, as if someone had moved it. Or opened it. Her? Nah. Must have done it yourself. Doubtful, though. Hmmmmm.

In the bedroom, you think of her, as you always do in this room. Not a bad wife. And so forgiving. That Christmas three years ago, when you were awakened to the Spike Jones record, "When the Fuhrer says we are the master race, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil, right in the Fuhrer's face". Yet she still forgave you for slapping her and breaking the

record. And her intentions had been good. She had thought you would like it. Anyway, she promised not to buy you any more records.

In front of the full-length mirror, you hold the shirt up to your body. It's beautiful. The buttons need shining and the color is a little faded, but it's beautiful. You undress.

Your fingers tremble as you button the blouse. Your knees quiver as you slip on the pants. Your lip begins to twitch as you feel the weight of the boots. You feel your strength multiply as you pull the laces tight. The hat is a crown.

You stand before the mirror. The runes are lightning on your shoulder. The black is the black of evil that lurks within. The black order. The skull and crossbones are the fate that awaits those who oppose you. The swastika is fear. The uniform itself is ruthless. Must remember to polish those buttons.

Now you shall have the respect you deserve. The Fourth Reich is coming. The boy from Baltimore.

Abruptly, the door behind you opens. You freeze. Panic begins to set in as you stare at your wife through the mirror. You struggle for control.

You look at her. She is wearing a peasant dress. Austrian, maybe. Calmly, you turn to face her. "Sieg Heil", you scream, as you salute.

She falls to her knees, arms raised towards you. "Mein Kampf."

MAGNETIC GAMES

Now you can convert your favorite game for vertical display or secure in-play storage with magnetic tape, unmounted boards and just an hour of your time. All you'll need is a metal surface and an unmounted gameboard. We supply the magnetic strips with self sticking adhesive already applied. You just cut the ½" x 1' strips into half inch squares and apply them to the unit counters which came with your game. The result is a ⅛" thick counter which will stack six high even when the mapboard is mounted in a vertical position for display purposes. Never worry about that pbm move being jostled again between turns.

Naturally this magnetic treatment will be less valuable for counters with two-sided printing, but that still leaves them with a multitude of uses. NOTE: it will be necessary to be sure that the top portion of all unit counters are uniformly applied to the top half of the magnetic strips. Otherwise, the polarity may be reversed and the counters will actually repel each other rather than attract. Therefore, it is wise to mark the back of the magnetic strips uniformly across the top so as to be sure to apply the top half of the counter to the top half of the magnetic strip.

Magnetic strips are available from Avalon Hill for 90¢ a foot or $7.50 for ten feet. Unmounted mapboards are available upon request for $6.00 apiece. Usual postage charges apply, as does the 5% state sales tax for Maryland residents.

TANKS, FOR THE MEMORIES

The Scenarios, with Notes, for the Origins II *Tobruk* Tournament by David Fram

The purpose of this article is to give those *Tobruk* freaks out in the Great American Heartland who couldn't attend the Second National Wargaming Convention a chance to see what they missed, and also give them some new, "official" scenarios to mull over.

First some comments on the tournament overall. When 3 o'clock rolled around on a sweltering Saturday afternoon at the convention, the tournament directors discovered that only thirty-two of the sixty-four conventioneers who had registered for *Tobruk* had shown up. This conveniently made our first round cut, and shaved at least an hour off of the very long event. Even before we started we were getting visits from people who were lost, asking where this or that was. Randy Reed came in every once in a while to see how people were reacting to the game and the situations, but he was never around for long, as he was always checking up

on everything, everywhere. Among the most interesting visitors, however, was Hal Hock, the designer of *TOBRUK*. Everyone should really have a chance to talk to him sometime, because he has literally megatons of information stored in his head, and he was able to defend all of the complaints and answer any question about the game system. He was even discussing unclassified information about high energy radiation weapons systems (you know, like lasers and that sort of thing). But he proved that being brilliant isn't everything, by walking around and singing, à la Bob Hope, "Tanks, for the memories!" which received the obvious moans and groans and suggestions that he find a moving tank to lay down in front of, or to close a tank hatch on his mouth, hoping that might stop such pun and games.

The actual conduct of the tournament went smoothly, though slowly. It was arranged as a single elimination event. The players had a choice of four

scenarios, and if they couldn't decide on one, then they had to play Scenario 4 called 'Bite The Bullet'. This scenario was constructed about one week before the tournament and was designed to prove that conciliation is better than chance, as you will see when you look at the set up. Each round was supposed to last about forty-five minutes but, by the end, they were taking about ninety minutes.

A note on the names of the scenarios: They all just happen to be Clint Eastwood/western movie titles and are all Randy Reed's. This should give some indication of the easy-going attitudes prevailing at even a national convention. These tournaments—while providing tough, educational, competition, are really *fun*.

So, play the following scenarios and see how you would have done when faced with new situations at a national tournament level.

SCENARIO ONE— 'HIGH NOON'

AVAILABLE FORCES

British

German:

SET UP:
British: Enter on turn 1, on south edge of board section E.
German: Enter on turn 1, on north edge of board section B.
GAME LENGTH: 20 turns
SPECIAL RULE:
APCR Ammo Limit: German player is limited to 12 rounds of APCR ammo for each tank. Announce type of ammo before firing.
VICTORY CONDITIONS:
The side which accumulates the most victory points by the end of the game wins. Ties will be adjudicated on the basis of nature of damage inflicted on opponent and general game situation. Victory points are awarded as follows:

British player receives:

	K-Killed	F-Killed	M-Killed
For each Pzkw-III h:	4 pts.	2 pts.	2 pts.
For each Pzkw-III j:	9 pts.	3 pts.	2 pts.

German player receives:

For each Stuart	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.
For each Grant	7 pts.	2 pts*.	2 pts.

*Note: Only one F-Kill per Grant allowed.

Scenario One proved to be one of the favorites with about 85% of the games played using this scenario. It was also the most balanced of all four and the most tactically interesting. It was so balanced, in fact, that one of the semi-final rounds was won on the *last* turn, with the *last* tank firing its *last* round at its *last* target. Even more amazing, that

last shot needed a natural 'twelve', *then* 'snakeeyes' and *then* a 'one through three' to destroy that last target and win the round. With about thirty awestruck onlookers watching with mouths agape, all the prerequisite die rolls were thrown. The winner of that game, by the way, went on to win the tournament, which was only fitting since with that

sort of luck, he had to be one of the Lord's chosen few. The favorite tactics employed in play saw the British advance and attempt to flank the Germans, who usually worked their way into a corner, and picked off Stuarts whenever possible.

SCENARIO TWO— 'THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY'

AVAILABLE FORCES:

British:

● All 'Company HQ' & 'First Platoon' units & offboard 155mm howitzer

German:

● All 'First Platoon' units & offboard 150mm Gun. Plus 1 concentration & 2 registrations

British: Enter on NORTH, EAST, or WEST edge of board Section A.
German: Set up first, on board section D, NORTH of hex row GG. Board A-D is only one in play.
GAME LENGTH:
20 turns.
VICTORY CONDITIONS:
The side which accumulates the most victory points by the end of the game wins. Victory points are awarded as follows:

British player receives:
For each Hedgehog counter controlled at end of game: 5 pts.

For Capture/F-Kill of 81mm Mortar: 4 pts.
For capture/F-Kill of MG 34: 3 pts.
German player receives:
For each Hedgehog counter controlled at end of game: 3 pts.
For capture/F-Kill of Vickers MG: 3 pts.
For capture/F-Kill of 2" mortar: 1 pt.
For each carrier K-Killed or M-Killed: 1 pt.
DEFINITION: For victory condition purposes, a side controls a hex if at least one friendly personnel or non-K-Killed, non-M-Killed vehicle unit occupies it, free of any enemy personnel units or functioning vehicular units.

This scenario was the personnel vs. personnel entry, giving the British a chance to attack, since they are always defending in every other scenario. As it turned out, it was played only once, and the hapless German was inundated by a force that we

didn't think was as powerful as it was. This is the best example of a scenario we should have killed, or at least changed a good deal. So go right ahead and balance it as you like, if you feel the way that I do about it. The tactics used saw the British sit back

and pound the Germans, wear them down, then wade in and use that fast truck transport to travel along the edges of the board.
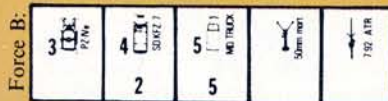
SCENARIO THREE— 'FORT APACHE'

AVAILABLE FORCES:

British:

All 'First Platoon' units
One off-board 25-pder
(Plus 1 Concentration & 2 Registrations)

German:

Force A:

All 'Company HQ' & 'First Platoon' units.

Force B:

Force B: Enter on turn 5, anywhere on north edge of board section A.

Board A-D is only one in play.

GAME LENGTH: 25 turns.

SET-UP:

British: Set up first, anywhere on board section D. The BUNKER counter *must* be positioned in hex DD6.

German: *Force A:* Enter on turn 1, anywhere on north edge of board section A.

The fight at Fort Apache was always hard fought, but was only played in the first two rounds, apparently because the players felt that it was better to finish a game of Scenario One than to run the risk of not finishing with Fort Apache having an arbitrary decision on the part of a judge. It takes longer than forty five minutes to play this one but I think it's a lot of fun. Here the favorite tactics were for the Pzkw-IIIh's to come on the board, waste the 2-pder, then engage the Crusader with everything

SPECIAL RULES:

1. The bunker in DD6 represents a critical supply depot. Victory is largely determined by who controls that hex at the end of the game. The bunker may be destroyed by any direct hit with ammunition from a weapon of 75mm or larger.

2. The Pzkw-IVe is limited to EIGHT rounds of smoke ammunition.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The side which accumulates the most victory points at the end of the game wins. Victory points are awarded for control of certain hexes:

—For each hedgehog counter controlled at end of the game: 2 points.

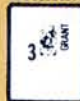—For control of hex DD6 at end of the game: 20 points.

(Use Scenario Two's definition of Control.)

that's left. The Pzkw-IV would close-in, firing smoke, if the Crusader still wasn't destroyed. After that it was pretty much a standard move-in-and-muck-around-till-the-other-guy's-had-it game.

SCENARIO FOUR— 'BITE THE BULLET'

AVAILABLE FORCES

British:

Plus: These infantry units:
1/1 (at 5-man strength)
1/2 (at 5-man strength)
HQ/1 (at full, 2-man strength)
CREW (for Grant = 6 men)

German:

Plus: These infantry units:
1/1 (at 4-man strength)
1/2 (at 4-man strength)
HQ/1 (at full, 2-man strength)
CREW (for PzIIIj = 5 men)

SETUP:

British: Set up first, on hex 12.
German: Set up second, on hex CC12.

Board A-D is only one in play.

GAME LENGTH: 20 turns

SPECIAL RULES:

1. Place a blank counter in hex S7; this represents the OASIS. Any unit in the Oasis hex is assumed to be in GOOD cover (unless riding an AFV), although it may not assume a full cover position.

2. Due to the effects of dehydration, malnutrition, and being lost in the desert, ALL personnel units fire and melee at ONE-HALF their normal strength. Personnel units may only move at the rate of one hex per turn, unless their morale is broken, in which case they may run every other turn.

3. Personnel units must enter the oasis hex by or during turn 10. Any unit failing to reach the oasis by turn 10 is assumed to have gone crazy from thirst and its morale is immediately broken in which case it cannot fire or melee but may only move towards the oasis. Meleeing units in the oasis hex are too busy to drink. Units which have not spent at least one non-meleeing turn in the oasis by turn 10 have their morale broken.

4. Use the AFV CREW Experimental rule, where appropriate. Crews may voluntarily bail out from the M-killed vehicles.

5. AFV Ammo limit: Each AFV has only TEN ROUNDS of ammo as follows: Grant: 5 rds/37mmAP and 5 rds/75mm AP
Pzkw-IIIj: 8 rds/AP and 2 rds/APCR

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The side which accumulates the most victory points by the end of the game wins. Victory points are awarded as follows:

—For each enemy AFV K-killed or M-killed, or NON-voluntary Bailout: 10 pts.

—For each enemy HQ casualty record box checked off: 2 pts.

—For each enemy crew or infantry recordbox checked off: 1 pt.

With this scenario, people deserved what they got if they couldn't agree on another scenario. It was only played twice, and only in the first round. In both cases, very young players were opposing men in their mid-twenties, one of whom went on to win the event. This game is really great fun if you only want to have a 'best three out of five' series because you can play to a conclusion in a very short time. Note, however, that luck plays a very large role.

Some clarifications are needed in this scenario:

a) To determine 'half-strenth,' take the number of men, cross index for the strength, halve *that* number, and then round down.

b) Running every other turn means *walk* one turn and *run* the next.

c) AFV's in the oasis are *not* hull-down in this scenario. AFV crews must bailout to drink before turn 10 or there is a non-voluntary bailout. They can bail back *in* but that is a two turn operation, one turn to get in and one turn to get set-up.

The main factor in this game is to see who is going to stop first and try to kill the other guy. If one stops, the other could keep going to put three more hexes between the map edge and the tank. After one side is stopped, then the other tank can keep moving or it could try to machine gun the enemy. However, it all depends on who 'draws' first. Players will probably find that each side wins about evenly. A fun (but dangerous for tournament level play) little game.

Those of you who didn't attend the convention and missed the only officially sponsored *TOBRUK* event now know what you missed. I hope it has sated the appetites of the voracious *TOBRUK* fans everywhere looking for a short and sweet little game.

SNEAK ATTACKS

by Bill Farone

For those of us seriously addicted to the playing of wargames it comes as a rude shock when an opponent uses tactics based on a rules interpretation that doesn't coincide with our understanding of those same rules. Often, this occurs because of a difference of opinion as to how rules were meant to be combined when used for certain unusual situations. Those who buy games for their simulation value can easily dismiss these tactical "gems" but those of us who play the same game dozens or hundreds of times cannot do so. These tactical sneak attacks can sometimes be the key to a winning technique. Often they lead to arguments over the technical soundness of the rules. In all cases they must be viewed, at least, as part of "clever" gamesmanship.

Consider a nice simple game like *AFRIKA KORPS*. The first thought is that there could be nothing sneaky in this simple game. A close reading of the supply rules in conjunction with the attack rules will quickly dispel this thought. One sneaky play is to catch a German stack of three with one weak unit in it. Attack the weak unit with odds guaranteed to leave units up against both sides of the stack and soak-off against the rest. In his turn the German is forced to attack because he is in your zone of control but he cannot do so because he has no supply. He is thus eliminated. Of course, you must screen these units to some extent because one side of your "surround" might be attacked from outside allowing the surrounded units to become supplied at the time of their attack against the rest of the surrounding units. To the "hard core" *AK* players the above tactic is no surprise and represents a standard way of eliminating those 7-7-10 units and winning the game in the process. However, the first time one gets caught in that sequence it usually causes the "you can't do that" reaction and thus qualifies as a typical sneak attack.

Moving from the old-fashioned to the modern let us consider eliminating a bunker in *SQUAD LEADER*. If one looks at the weapons available the flamethrower is the obvious choice. If one fires it at the bunker across the covered arc there is no defense modifier to the attack roll. If we study the rules a little further we find that a flamethrower is equally effective from 1 or 2 hexes away. It also suffers no adverse effects from firing through smoke. Our sneak attack is now set. We drop smoke from artillery or armor into the two hexes in front of the bunker and advance our squad from the flamethrower into the second hex away. In order to attack the squad with the flamethrower the squads in the bunker have a double smoke roll to contend with while the flamethrower is going to get a full force shot into the bunker. The expected value for the double smoke roll is the maximum 6 affording excellent protection. Again, this may be a standard tactic for some but try it for the first time on someone and then listen to what they have to say about John Hill and Don Greenwood!

Somewhere in time between the previous two games lies *PANZER-LEADER*. This game is full of sneak possibilities. The most outrageous to some players is the "un-CAT-able" stack. A stack of 4 armored units with appropriate defense factors can move right up against a stack of infantry and fear no negative effects. One simply cannot get enough attack factors to roll even on the 1-4 column. Another favorite ploy is to put the "junk" units (wagons and trucks) on top of forts or other key positions that one anticipates will be hit by indirect fire. Since the indirect fire is divided among the units

in the stack a wagon sitting on a fort halves the attack on the fort. Sure, the wagon is vaporized when the attack hits but the fort has much higher odds of surviving for one more important turn.

Let's shift back to the "classics" or any game where the winner of a battle gets to retreat the loser's units directly before making his attack. Let us examine *STALINGRAD* as an example. As the Germans you are having a hard time cracking a river line. The ploy is to invite an attack by making one which leaves a couple of units on the river. The Russian player then sees an opportunity to hold the line by counterattacking since you will be forced to attack his totally doubled position again. The trick is to make sure he will need a soak-off to make the counterattack. You get to retreat his soak-off unit and you do it in such a way that it ends up all alone behind the river. This will usually allow an attack that has high odds of getting you across the river. Even worse is the "1-3 Envelopment strategy" wherein the attacker's legal retreat hexes are stacked to capacity, thus forcing the defender to "retreat" the attacker behind the *defender's* lines. This theme is very common in many games and while not as "sneaky" as some, it is definitely using the rules as opposed to using military strategy or tactics.

The flavor of these rules twists would not be complete without mention of an "escape clause" as Tom Oleson calls it drawn from recent correspondence with him concerning *ANZIO*. Tom points out that in games I and II using the 2nd edition rules the Allies can win by simply maintaining a port in Genoa from which they can, at the end, place a line off the Northwest corner of the board. Since, in order to win the Germans must maintain a continuous line across the board, the Germans lose even if they have destroyed all other Allied units and control all of Italy outside this area!

There are quite a few players who do not look favorably on "rules lawyers", i.e. players whose interest in the semantics of rules when they are in a tough spot go beyond the spirit of the game. One of the best ways to avoid problems in this area is to be aware of the sneaky or ambiguous portions of the rules in your game of interest and to iron these out with your opponent before the game begins. For devotees of AH games this makes the Question and Answer pages of *THE GENERAL* must reading and collecting.

There will probably never be a perfectly written game. Therefore, to enhance our understanding of a game and to allow for revision if needed, the only remaining course is a friendly or "mature" approach to play. Discussion and documentation of the pitfalls in playing a game can make that maturity much easier to attain keeping it from getting lost in the natural competitive desire to win. It is unfortunate that so much of the wargame literature consists of reviews and articles of new games. We rarely get to read about the sneak attacks inherent in virtually every game.

Over the years I have known players to become extremely upset over this facet of our hobby and to thus lose enjoyment from their games. It would seem that this could be greatly decreased by an increase in the wargaming literature on the actual playing of games and the selection of "like-minded" opponents.

⬡ A H

AREA TOP 50

Rank	Names	Times on List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	W. Dobson	13	2511RJP	2
2.	K. Combs	11	2496SJQ	1
3.	D. Cornell	13	2175OHK	3
4.	R. Chiang	19	2153GHN	4
5.	D. Garbutt	9	2060DFJ	6
6.	T. Oleson	20	2058QRY	5
7.	F. Freeman	4	2058DEE	7
8.	D. Burdick	11	2048DDJ	8
9.	P. Kemp	4	2019DDH	10
10.	P. Siragusa	4	2012CEF	9
11.	P. Huffman	14	1978EEG	11
12.	L. Newbury	13	1944EGK	13
13.	J. Kreuz	7	1940EFJ	18
14.	J. Zajicek	14	1930GJP	16
15.	D. Barker	18	1930FGL	12
16.	S. Packwood	18	1928HHL	14
17.	J. Sunde	12	1927IIO	15
18.	J. Angiolillo, Jr.	13	1906DGI	17
19.	J. Beard	—	1905CDH	—
20.	F. Preissle	8	1879IKS	—
21.	R. Leach, Jr.	13	1866FIM	19
22.	R. Wood	17	1838IJS	21
23.	N. Markevich	3	1825CDE	20
24.	L. Kelly	4	1816STZ	24
25.	D. Greenwood	12	1753EEG	27
26.	K. Blanch	13	1735FGJ	30
27.	J. Gardner	—	1727CEH	—
28.	P. Dobson	9	1718DEF	25
29.	F. Small	11	1715EFJ	23
30.	W. Letzin	7	1713CDG	26
31.	N. Cromartie	7	1710EFL	28
32.	T. Slafka	6	1706EFK	29
33.	D. Munsell	6	1698FDH	35
34.	W. Knapp	5	1693IKQ	31
35.	C. Combs	—	1693LEC	—
36.	T. Baruth	7	1693CDF	32
37.	F. Sbastion	6	1674EHL	33
38.	S. Martin	4	1673CFF	37
39.	E. Miller	6	1666EHL	38
40.	P. Carson	4	1650ECE	40
41.	J. Uram	3	1650DFF	—
42.	B. Haden	4	1646HIN	34
43.	J. Rarick	—	1639CFH	—
44.	W. Scott, Jr.	7	1627FFL	36
45.	K. MacDonald	12	1612EEK	39
46.	D. Tierney	6	1611DDJ	—
47.	J. Kenower	6	1605CFF	41
48.	J. Frediani	1	1584FCF	45
49.	J. Cornell	—	1580ECF	—
50.	E. Alexis	—	1577HJQ	—

CROSS OF IRON

German: Joseph Suchar
Russian: M. Jonathan Mishcon
Commentary: Don Greenwood
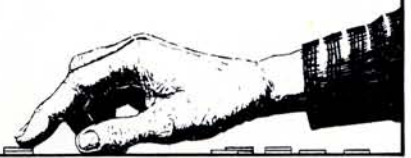
Scenario 102 is one of the ten new CROSS OF IRON scenarios first offered in Vol. 15, #6 of THE GENERAL as "SERIES 100". A brief description follows for those of you who have not yet acquired these new scenarios. The entire set of 10 scenarios is available from our parts department for $4.00 plus 40- postage and handling.

Scenario 102 is set in the Panikovo Forest on Aug. 17, 1941 during the advance on Leningrad. The 2nd Co., 1st Bn. 409th Infantry Reg't has been set upon by Russian infantry and armor emerging unexpectedly from the forest. Falling back, the Germans without anti-tank support, formed a hedgehog and waited for relief. That relief takes the form of a random choice artillery module and three StgIIIB's which enter on a special Rally Phase die roll. The Russian player wins unconditionally by eliminating the equivalent of 8 German squads in 6 turns.

All non-supplemental COI rules are in play including Battlefield Integrity. Wheatfields are considered open ground. There is no wind, but any that blows up will start blowing to the NE. Environmental Conditions are "Very Dry".

The players are experienced SL enthusiasts who played a major role in pre-publication playtesting of both COI and COD, as well as the SERIES 100 scenarios. Your neutral commentator is the developer of SL and designer/developer of COI.

PRE-GAME RUSSIAN COMMENT

My plan is to use my armor early on as much as possible. This includes, but isn't limited to, mounted infantry that unloads when a tank "Advancing Fires", multiple overruns of a hex and ending tank movement atop his entrenchments to force him out. I am willing to risk immobilizations early on to increase his early losses. It is notable that tank losses (as long as you keep one) have no effect on battlefield integrity so if I trade tanks for German squads, I not only approach my 8 Kill target but diminish his ability to resist my infantry fire. Whoever drops a morale level first stands an excellent chance of speeding his demise. I refer everyone to the Morale Table for this scenario and Bob Medrow's excellent article differentiating morale level 6 and morale level 7 squads in Vol. 14 No. 5 of THE GENERAL.

My setup is designed to punch hard frontally at the 4H5 woods while I make a fairly safe flanking move toward 4O5. My only disagreement with the German setup is bunching squads without leaders—one lucky potshot and they're gone.

Final note: CROSS OF IRON mandates that "buttoned-up" tanks are + on the TO HIT roll, but in the face of artillery and substantial Infantry firepower I won't risk unbuttoning.

PRE-GAME GERMAN COMMENT

Having played this scenario before as the Russian, I am well aware of the enormous advantages they have as a result of having five tanks at their disposal immediately. The probability of the German *not* getting their tanks during the first two turns is .55%. Since the Stugs cannot fire during the Advancing Fire Phase even if they come on in Turn 3 they are of no use till turn 4. Hence the Russians will have three full turns to use their armor for overruns. Additionally, the Russian tanks with bow and rear MGs can get, with proper placement; up to 10 MG shots per turn. Admittedly they are either ones or twos but the expectation of scoring with that many shots is quite good.

Hence I've decided on a forward defense hoping to survive the Russian Prep Fire with enough firepower to disrupt his initial position. Of course, this means that if his opening shots are better than average I am in bad trouble. However, since I don't know the scenario intimately, I will experiment with an upfront fire wall. This is reinforced by my gut feeling that under the victory conditions of the scenario, the Russian has quite an edge and that I must hurt him early if I am to survive.

PRE-GAME NEUTRAL COMMENTARY—

The initial setups of both players shows a firm grasp of the problems they face. The Russian has correctly analyzed the situation as one in which he must "make hay while the sun shines". He must press his considerable initial advantage before the passage of time brings the equalizer in the form of the superior German armor and effective artillery support. That the Russian intends to push his initial advantage is obvious given the disposition of the six squads in the open at 5Y1-Y2. The Russian is obviously banking on his first fire opportunity with 16 factors plus more from 5W1 to clear the 4H5-I5 woods before the German can retaliate in his defensive fire phase. If the Germans do survive the initial prep fire unbroken they have a 20% chance for an outright KIA on the three squads in Y1 and a further 8% chance for the next three in Y2 with penetration from the LMG. Such a loss would not be catastrophic to the Russian cause as their morale level would remain unchanged and the Russian armor would still be capable of salvaging a win. Given their initial lack of armor causing them to suffer a morale loss a full 20% sooner than the Russians and the relatively higher value of their squads the German force is far the more brittle of the two and subject to headlong collapse if things go badly initially. Considering the unlikelihood of both German squads braving the Russian fire successfully, the Russian gamble is a good one.

The German position is far more difficult to agree with even though he is truly on the horns of a dilemma. Like his historical counterpart, the German commander is outnumbered, outgunned, virtually defenseless against enemy armor and with no place to run. His position is not hopeless, however. He has a few advantages—namely being on the defensive and the superior effective range of his small arms fire—which he must take advantage of if he is to win. Although he is powerless to stop the incursion of the Russian armor, the T26's don't have enough firepower to win alone. The Russian infantry is necessary to mop up what the tanks dislodge. If the German can keep the Russian infantry at bay (hopefully 5 hexes away so as to halve their firepower) long enough for the Stugs to arrive, both his firepower and morale situation will improve to the point where it is he who has the upper hand. If he can maintain fields of fire on the open ground which the Russian infantry must cross to close, the defensive fire DRM for moving in the open will enable him to give as good as he gets. Thus, the German has two contradictory goals—to get as far away as possible while maintaining fields of fire on any infantry attempting to close. In trying to fill both he may accomplish neither and that appears to be about to occur here.

That the German intends to stay far away is obvious given his proclivity for positions as far south as the opening setup limitations will allow. The German obviously intends to occupy the southernmost woods with half his force during his first move. Unfortunately, this will cost him his first turn's Prep Fire and he doesn't have as much firepower that he can afford to give half of it away on the first turn. This condition is further aggravated by the placement of the MMG in the open at L8. Surely it could have started in M8 so as to avoid loss of its initial Prep Fire Opportunity! The forward elements comprising the other half of his force are exposed to an enemy first fire opportunity & isolated from help. His first squad, once broken, is as good as dead with no chance to rally. The other two enclaves of forward fire (H5-I5 and N5-O5) are being asked to hold back a flood virtually unsupported. In my opinion, the German would be far better off centering the bulk of his forces in the superior defensive terrain of the building at O6-P6 and the nearby woods. Strong forces in M8, N5, O5, P6 and R5 could put down mutually supporting strong fire on all of the approach lanes while offering good rally positions (O6 and R7) for any broken troops plus a possible retreat route to those same southernmost woods via P8 and N9. A single squad in I6, covered by fire from M8, N5 and O5 would probably have at least two turns to start a fire (dice roll of 7 or better) which, given the very dry conditions, would reduce this entire copse in a flash, depriving the Russian infantry of any effective cover from which to form a firebase to the west. That setup would allow the Germans a chance to rally their own broken units, protect their own forces from 1st turn Russian Prep Fire losses, and probably result in a lessened Russian initial advance due to superior German firepower. As it is, the German is tempting fate from the start hoping to win a craps game against a Russian "house" with the odds definitely in the latter's favor.

RUSSIAN TURN 1 POST PREP FIRE

Very successful Prep Fire—will use this break to thrust towards 4K9 through 4H5. I'm holding two

tanks back on board 5 for infantry transport. His 150mm artillery is very imposing.

RUSSIAN PREP FIRE, TURN 1

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
Sahavitch, MMG	4H5	4	0	6	M	6,11
8, 9, 10	4I5	6	+1	2	KIA	
11-16, 2LMG	4H5	16	+1	9	M	**10, 8**

GERMAN DEFENSIVE FIRE, TURN 1

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
8	4S2	4	+2	9	—	
4, LMG	5W1	4	+1	6	—	
7, 10	5W1	4	+1	4	1	**10,10-4, 8-9, 4-10**

RUSSIAN ADVANCING FIRE, TURN 1

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
2-4	4O5	3	+1	6	—	
T26/A	4K8	1	0	6	—	
T26/A	4K8	4	+6*/0	2/4	1	6, 7
T26/B	4N8	1	0	6	—	
T26/C	4N8	1	0	6	—	

*Claimed hit on basis of 33.32 (dice roll 2 = possible hit regardless of DRM)

RUSSIAN POST ADVANCING FIRE TURN 1

Flank thrust will start in Advance Phase move to 4R2 and 4Q2. This will force him to choose between dueling six squads or retiring. I'll try to keep the LMGs firing by advancing two squads with them to 5X10.

RUSSIAN TURN 1, NEUTRAL COMMENTARY—

The Russian should be well pleased with his initial turn. The German attempt to duke it out with only half his force understandably got the worst of

it. This move is an excellent example of the balancing effect of the luck factor in SQUAD LEADER. There are those who criticize the game for having too high a luck factor due to both the large number of rolls and the greatly varying effects any one dice roll may generate. I, on the other hand, prefer to refer to this wide range of results as the "uncertainty" factor—it seems much less offensive than "luck". Regardless of what you call it, however, this veritable deluge of dice rolls will tend to even things out in the long run. No one rolls consistently better than anyone else over a prolonged sample and although no one will argue that all dice rolls in SQUAD LEADER are equal (i.e., a "2" dice roll on an ordinary rally attempt certainly does not equal a "2" fire combat resolution on a loaded hex), this very wide variance in possible results will right many an unequal contest. I've seen many a seemingly hopeless situation retrieved by low dice rolls at a fortuitous time and it is this very reason that the German is still in the game despite a questionable setup and good Russian start. Let's back up these statements with a closer look at the first player turn's dice.

The dice have already fallen in anger no less than 26 times. Analyzing the Russian's 16 throws we find an average dice roll of 6.38—good, but by no means spectacular. Within this good spectrum the Russian was quite fortunate to roll well in 2 of his 4 most important attempts (the three attacks on H5-I5 and the unfortunate failure of Sahavitch to pass his MC) which all but wiped out the German left flank. The German had exactly even luck, averaging 7 on ten dice rolls. Although seemingly the recipient of poorer luck vis a vis the Russian,

the German has little to complain about. His attacks did about as much as could be expected given their meager sustenance and overall the German should be thankful to have placed his artillery accurately, to have survived the lucky hit on K8 by the T26, and above all for the effective long range fire of the 7th and 10th squads which combined with Sahavitch's cowardly demeanor salvaged at least a partial blunting of the Russian drive and drew some, albeit not enough, Russian blood.

Moving now to specifics, the Russian move and German counterfire are well executed given their initial dispositions. I can find fault only with two aspects of the Russian's move—both pertaining to his overzealous use of armor. While he is quite correct to get the tanks into action as soon as possible, the situation does not warrant the risks, albeit miniscule, which he has taken in firing the main armament of the lead tank or moving at full speed in the rearmost vehicle. The chances of securing a hit at such long range and speed of approach are both minimal and exactly equal to the prospects of a gun malfunction. The extreme luck which enabled this hit to occur does not excuse the fact that such fire was ill-advised. Their numerical advantage gives the T26s an even chance against the German Stugs but their chances rapidly diminish alongside their lessening numerical advantage. To lose a tank in this manner with so little to gain in exchange for the risk would be criminal. In retrospect, the Russian must have agreed, for he passed up similar shots with the next two tanks. Similarly, unless the Russian has planned his moves two or more turns in advance and knows of something down the road that I can't see with

INITIAL SETUP & RUSSIAN PREP FIRE—The Russian, relying on his first fire advantage, has daringly setup in advanced positions in the open at 5Y1-5Y2. The gamble pays off as the Russian Prep Fire breaks all German resistance in the 4H5-I5 woods.
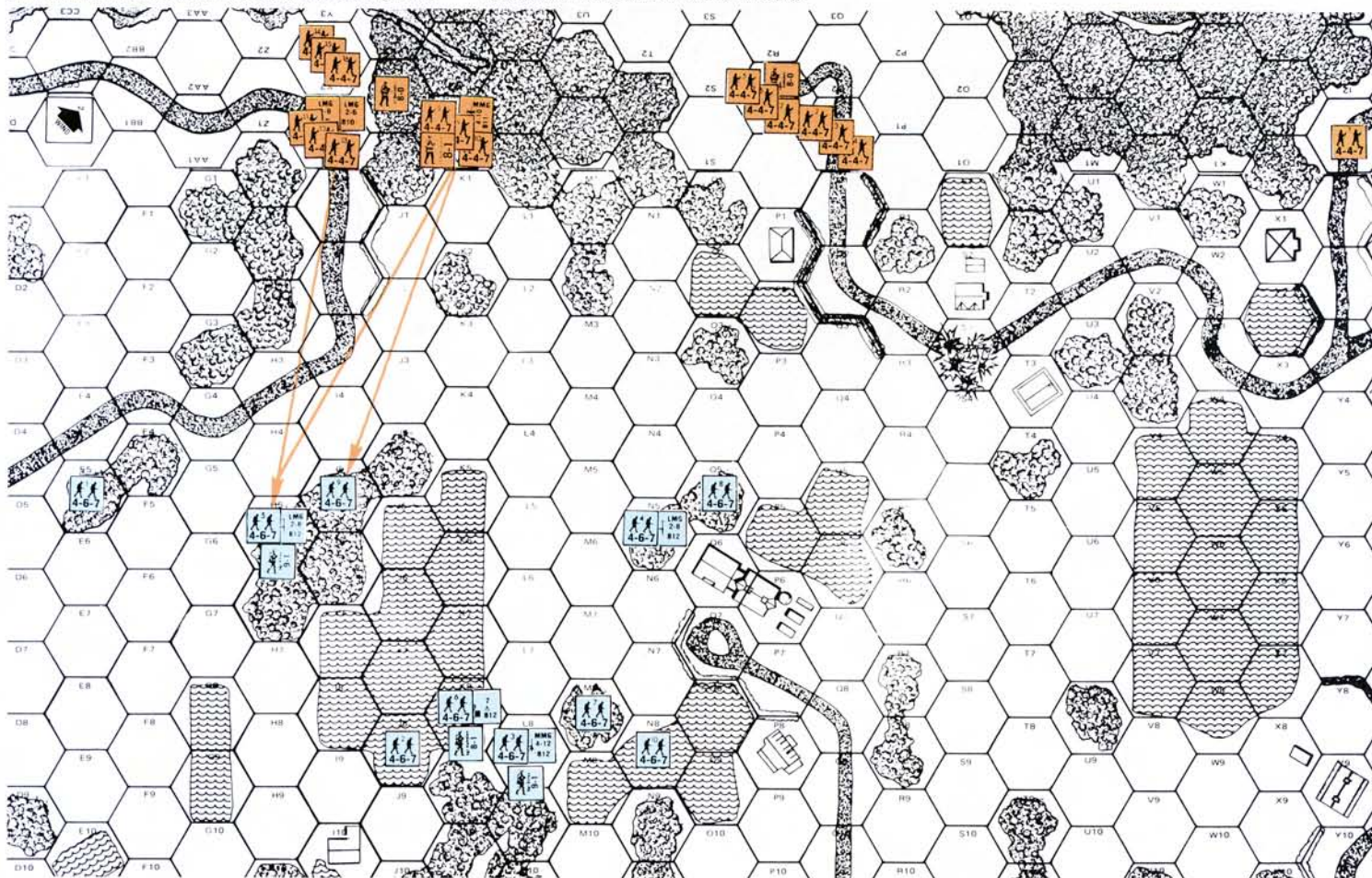
lesser foresight, the risk of the vehicle in the rear for the sake of an extra hex of movement at this point is foolish. If immobilized on the first turn, the vehicle would be effectively out of the battle.

The Russian, however, got away with both indiscretions and is in an excellent position. His advance into Q2-R2 will force a German withdrawal from O5 to stay out of the Russian's normal range, which means that the 8th squad will lose its Prep Fire Opportunity as well as the four squads (and MMG) in the open to the South who must seek cover in the woods behind. Furthermore, if Kelso doesn't rally immediately and rejoin the main forces in the vicinity of K9, he is all but doomed and his loss—coupled with any other elimination (and surely the 1st squad can't be far behind if the Russian armor goes after it) will drop the German morale level a notch.

GERMAN TURN 1 PRE-PREP FIRE

Well, you can begin to appreciate what those tanks can do with that potshot at 4K8. Fortunately, I survived his lucky hit this time. My defensive fire was fairly effective but the loss of the center woods position is devastating. I had hoped at the very worst to have the leader survive so that I could at least run him back to the main position at the edge of the board. He will now be cut off by the Russian tanks and I have to, in effect, write him off.

My artillery draw was excellent and I hope to be able to do a number on the Russians tanks as well as his infantry with my four fire missions of 150mm.

GERMAN PREP FIRE, TURN 1

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
150mmFFE	T26/A	30	+1	7		—

GERMAN TURN 1 POST PREP FIRE COMMENTS

My plan now is to consolidate my main position. I am also going to try and get the squad in 4E5 to 4B7 to set up a lane of fire across the open ground in front of my main position.

RUSSIAN DEFENSIVE FIRE, TURN 1

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
T26/E	4C7	2	-2	6	1	7
T26/A	4M9	2	Blocked Los			
T26/B	4N5	2	+1	10		—
T26/B	4N5	4	+1/ +1	2/4	1	8, 12
5-7	4N5	6	+1	6	M	10, 6

GERMAN ADVANCING FIRE PHASE, TURN 1

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
Stites, 6, 7	5X0	2	0	5	M	10, 8
2, 3	5X0	2	+1	10		—

GERMAN TURN 1 END OF TURN COMMENTS

The tank fire is just devastating. The loss of those squads is again a reminder of just how potent the tanks' fire can be. My artillery now remains my major hope.

GERMAN TURN 1, NEUTRAL COMMENTARY—

The Russian 10th squad has rallied despite being under the effects of DM—a bit of good fortune only partially evened out by the German's maintenance of his radio contact. Kelso failed to rally, and is doomed, but that's small potatoes compared to the rest of the German woes. It has taken exactly one turn for the entire German piecemeal forward defenses to be blown away.

This has come about due to the combined effects of clever Russian play and good fortune, and a mistaken German setup which is being steadily compounded rather badly. Granted the ill-advised location of the 1st squad in E5 in the first place it is still hard to fathom what withdrawing him would gain other than a slight spreading out of the Russian forces. Even had he made it, two tanks would have dispatched him just as easily there. It took a good shot to break him but considering what little there was to be gained perhaps he deserved what he got. Making the best of a bad situation, I'd have advanced to F4 in an attempt to pin down the Russian infantry for a turn, or attempted to entrench.

The move of the 8th squad back to N5 was an extremely poor choice for reasons totally divorced from its eventual breaking in N5. The German cannot afford to concentrate his infantry in the same hex for a lucky shot to eliminate all his eggs in one basket. More importantly, by forsaking the move to the better cover of the O6 building, there is absolutely nothing left to contest the advance of the seven squads to the east.

Even less understandable is why both of the remaining good order leaders have moved into the same hex. A second leader offers almost no advantages but is a great detriment when incoming fire arrives to threaten double breaks. The second leader should have moved to K9 to direct the MMG fire (which should have been firing steadily from M8 since the beginning) and improve, not detract from, the survival chances of the 2nd and 3rd squads.

RUSSIAN TURN 1—German defensive fire vs. the moving infantry in 4S2 is ineffective but long range fire from the German 7th and 10th squads eliminates one squad and breaks two others and a leader in

W1, causing them to rout to 5X1. The Russian Advancing Fire from 4S2 and the recently arrived tanks is ineffective.

KEY: lines = Prep Fire; dots = Defensive Fire; Dashes = Advancing Fire; solid arrows = moves; hollow arrows = advances; Brown = Russian; Blue = German.
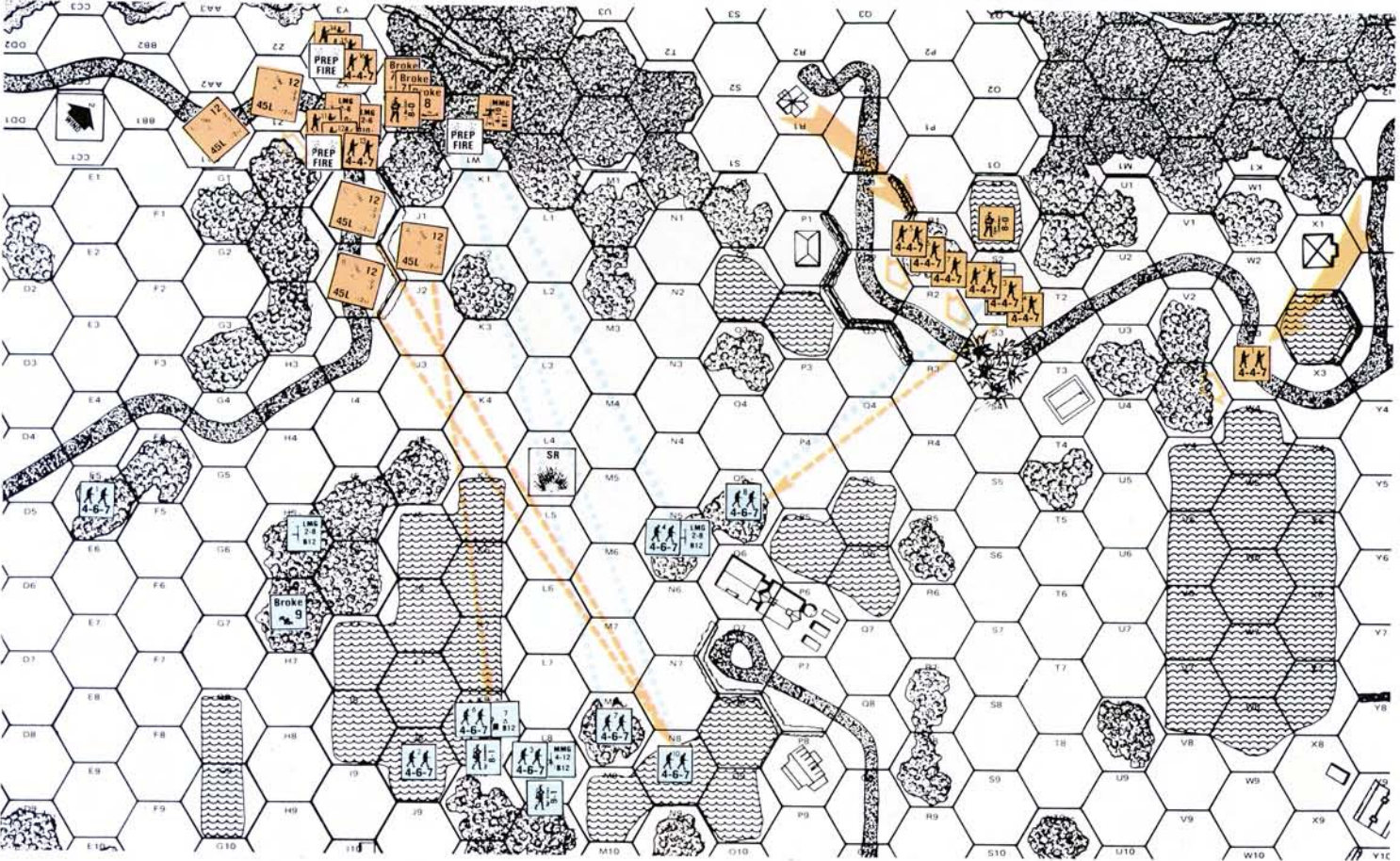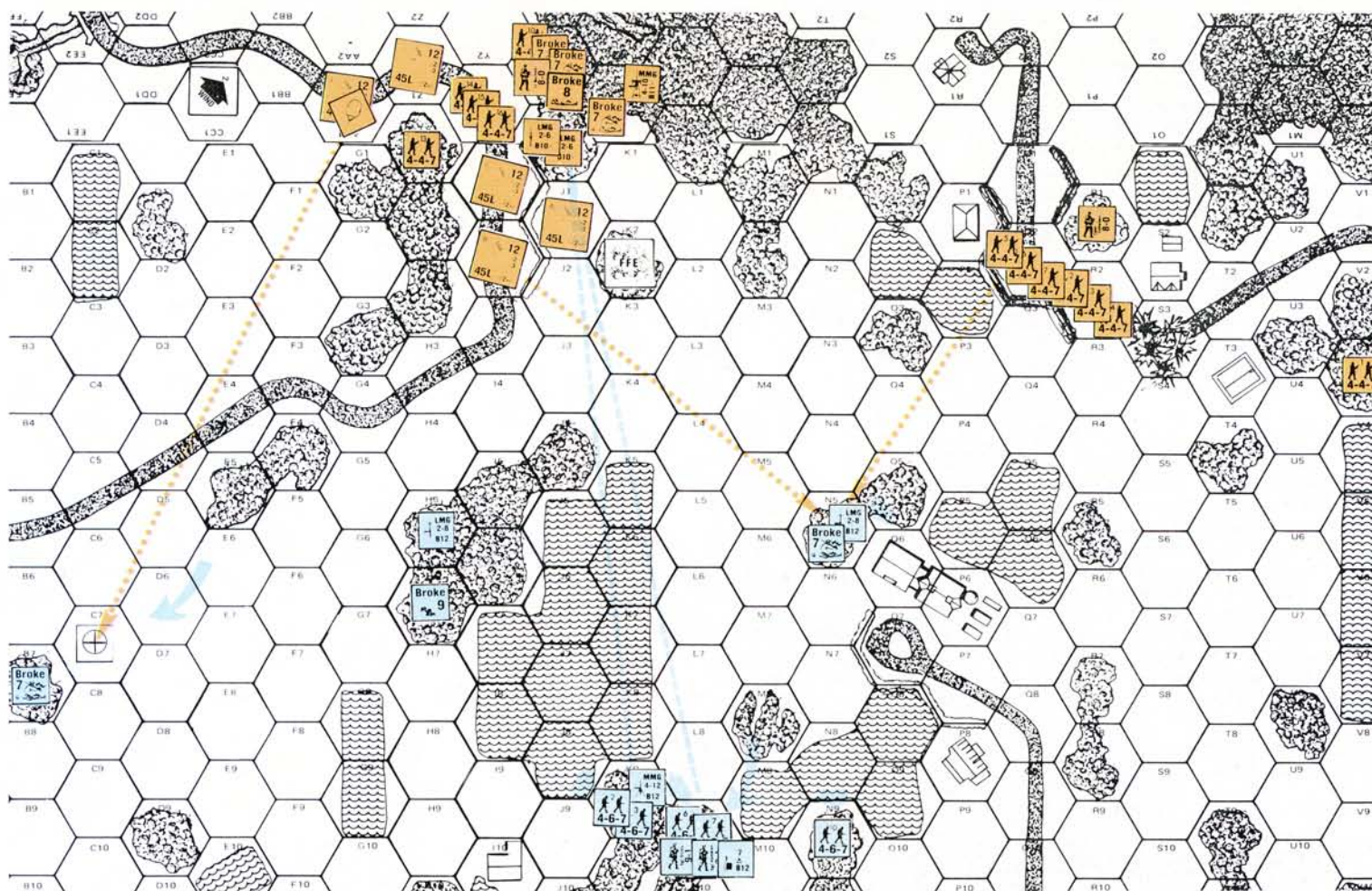
GERMAN TURN 1—The Germans spend their turn moving rather than firing and as a consequence their Prep Fire is limited to an ineffective artillery barrage. The Russian Defensive Fire, on the other hand, is devastating. First T26S/E breaks the retreating 1st German squad in the open at C7 and then T26S/B and the three squads in 4Q2 hammer the German 4th and 8th squads in 4N5—destroying one and breaking the other. Only the long range marksmanship of the German 6th & 7th squads against 5X0 in the Advancing Fire Phase puts a damper on the Russian—breaking the two squads which had advanced there last turn and which now rout to 5X1 and 5W0.

The matter of whether the German should have used up a 150mm fire mission for a 28% chance of a kill or immobilization against a single tank is bound to be controversial. Normally, I'd condemn such an attack as wasting a vital resource but the German position is critical and he is fortunate in having four such fire missions. By using his artillery so frivolously he serves notice on the Russian that there's lots more where that came from—and thereby may serve to cause the Russian to spend more time dispersing than advancing. Given his desperate situation and the need to buy time at any cost the decision to fire was probably a good one which, nonetheless, was not blessed with luck. After all, had he knocked off a tank it would have been far harder to fault the order. Overall, however, we keep coming back to the original setup. Had the German positions been more centralized—say within the M8-N5-R5-R8 area, the artillery could have given much more effective support against multiple targets at virtually any danger point.

Turning now to fate we have an additional 19 dice rolls to analyze. The Russian once again fared better than average with ten dice rolls averaging 6.7 while the German's luck dipped below average with nine dice rolls for a 7.56 average. Luck, or the lack of it, is contributing to the German woes but the inescapable conclusion remains that his trouble is of his own doing, i.e., a poor setup and a worse move. The Russian has only to advance & capture the already broken Germans to win (an option that the attack on the already broken occupants of N5

seems to have ignored) or failing that, to eliminate them, drop German morale and wipe the force out entirely. Barring either colossal luck, immediate arrival of reinforcements, or terrible Russian play, the German has lost this game on turn 1.

RUSSIAN TURN 2 PRE-PREP FIRE COMMENTS

Firing one mission of 150mm against *one* tank—looks like he has lots of artillery. I would have preferred my 8-1 leader to rally. I will cut off the German 9-1 leader with two tanks and destroy the broken squad in 4B7 by moving a tank adjacent. I was a fool to kill that squad in 4N5, but I will capture the remaining squad and continue my flanking move.

GERMAN DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE, TURN 2

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
MMG	4C8	MMG	-3	5	—	
FFE	5X1	30	+1	7	3	4, 9, 6
FFE	5W1	30	+1	8	2	5
FFE	5X0	30	+1	3	KIA	FIRE

RUSSIAN TURN 2 POST DEFENSIVE FIRE

The 150mm barrage could have been worse but with the woods ablaze I've probably lost my 8-1 leader and LMGs for the duration. It's a good thing I've already destroyed his forward positions or this fire could have proven catastrophic.

RUSSIAN ADVANCING FIRE PHASE, TURN 2

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
T26/B	4K9	1	+1	7	—	
T26/C	4K9	1	+1	9	—	
T26/A	4K9	1	+1	6	—	

RUSSIAN TURN 2 END OF TURN COMMENTS

The German 9-1 leader is now in real trouble. His loss will automatically drop the German morale one level. My tanks will charge any woods the German does not entrench in next turn and I'll start taking lots of small shots, hoping to break his reduced morale leaders.

RUSSIAN TURN 2, NEUTRAL COMMENTARY—

The German gets the best of the Rally Phase as Kelso rallies in time to wish he hadn't and the radio contact is maintained and artillery fire redirected while no Russians rally. There is no Prep Fire only because the Russian is too busy falling on the hapless German forward positions.

This move seems well executed by both players given their situations. The MMG attack on the rear of the T26s was a clever bit of quick thinking which might have paid big dividends with a great dice roll. My only criticism of the move is that I think the Russian's purpose would have been better served by moving up all his armor rather than waiting to load infantry. The infantry will get there almost as fast on foot.

For the first time the German enjoyed the better luck with an average dice roll of 6 compared to 7.4 for the Russian. This allowed the Germans to match losses (which they can't afford) with the Russian for the first time thanks to their artillery fire which delivered an added bonus in the form of the fire in 5XO which considering the dry condi-

tions and prevailing winds should eliminate the Russian support weapons and lead the broken Russians in that forest a merry chase as they attempt to keep one step ahead of the advancing fire.

The damage has already been done far behind the German's protective artillery fire however. The elimination of the first squad at B7 for failure to rout and the surrender of the 8th squad to Double Timing Russians in O5 has brought the Red player to within two squads of his victory conditions. The dire predicament of Kelso before the advancing Russian squad in H5 should soon cause a drop in morale. The German needs his armor immediately, plus his artillery back in the vicinity of P6 from its now too advanced position, and a major issue of colossal luck.

GERMAN TURN 2 PRE-PREP FIRE COMMENTS

I have beaten the odds and the Stugs came in this turn. However, with the equivalent of 6 squads lost and only two to go I can expect a massive Soviet rush to push me over the brink. I feel at this time reduced to a desperation attempt. So I am going to close range on the T26 in 4A8. If I ignore him and try to move by, he gets a rear shot in the Movement Phase and another in Prep Fire. So I'll throw everything on the line in an attempt to knock out two tanks. I will also try to draw my artillery back towards me while I attempt to entrench for my 'last' stand.

GERMAN POST PREP FIRE COMMENTS TURN 2

My entrenching attempt is successful. However, I must now rush the leader across the open ground in an attempt to avoid his loss (thus tipping over the morale drop number). If he isn't killed, I still have some hope.

RUSSIAN DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE, TURN 2

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
2	4I8	2	-2	6	1	7
T26/A	4I8	2	-2	4	K1A	Morale Drop
T26/B	4A10	45L	+6	5	—	Acquired
T26/C	4B5	45L	+8	3	—	Acquired

GERMAN ADVANCING FIRE PHASE, TURN 2

Firer	Target	FP	DRM	DR	Effect	Result
MMG	4G8	MMG	-3	7	—	

GERMAN TURN 2 END OF TURN COMMENTS

The loss of the leader really hurts. My hope is to survive the Prep Fire Phase with all three tanks and then possibly knock out two Russian tanks.

## GERMAN TURN 2, NEUTRAL COMMENTARY—

The Rally Phase brought both players luck as Sahavitch rallied for the Russians while the German armor arrives which, at the very least, means that they will have to suffer 40% casualties (instead of 30%) before they take a step loss in morale. Unfortunately the loss of Kelso will more than make up for the extra 10% leniency in a single blow.

The dice rolling was rather sensational this time—a 5.8 average for the German and a whopping 4.5 (four rolls) for the Russian. Fortunately for the German most of those rolls served only to acquire targets on the German armor or the game would be over.

This time around the German move is rather praiseworthy. Having no actual targets to fire at, he showed the presence of mind to entrench and withheld his MG fire until the Advancing Fire Phase in anticipation of the T26/C rotating to fire on the appearing German armor. A clever piece of play but not backed by adequate dice.

The attempt to get Kelso back to K9, although unsuccessful was about all he could do. His death drops German morale one level and puts them at a tremendous disadvantage in any sustained firefight.

My only complaint is that I'd have entered a STG at B9 and reversed to C10 so as to outnumber T26/B 2:1. With the 3rd StG I'd have risked a rear shot to T26/B trusting in my speed and his change of covered arc to get me to E10 where I could engage tank A. While hardly *perfect*, it does present the German with a chance to engage the Russian armor piecemeal—and if successful—win the game. With the Russian armor gone, the remaining German infantry entrenched in woods with armor & heavy artillery support—might indeed reverse their fortunes.

RUSSIAN TURN 2—The Russian foregoes his Prep Fire in order to sweep forward into the vacated German defenses. The stunted German forces are so far in the rear that the only defensive fire he can manage is an ineffective MMG attack on the rear of T26S/B and

another artillery barrage on 5X0. The latter destroys one already broken squad and breaks another while setting the forest edge ablaze but the bulk of the Russian forces are already past what could have been a very fortuitous bottleneck. Russian MG Advancing Fire with

the three forward T26s is ineffective, but the very presence of T26S/A is enough to eliminate the broken German 1st squad in 4B7 which is forced to rout.
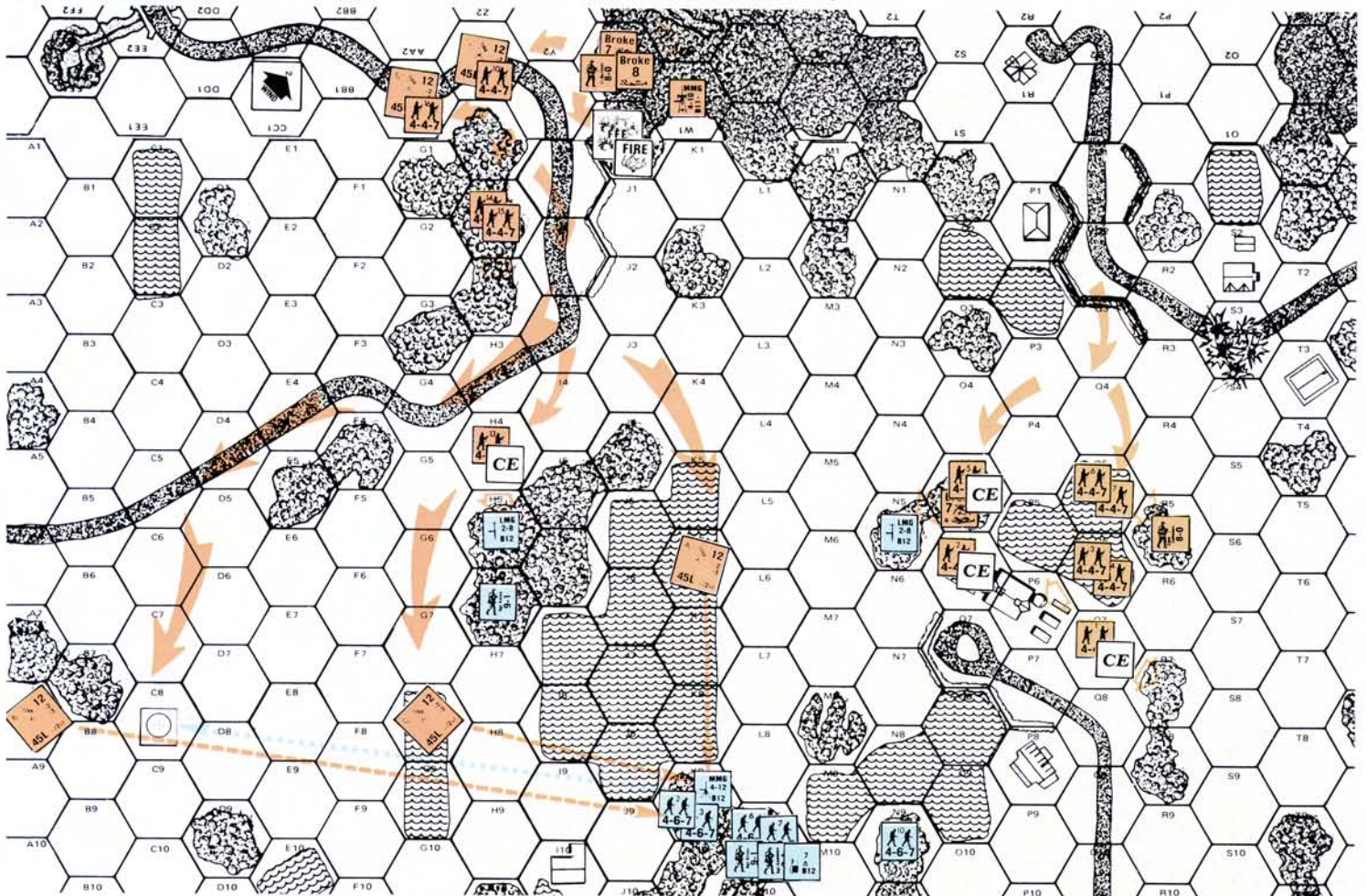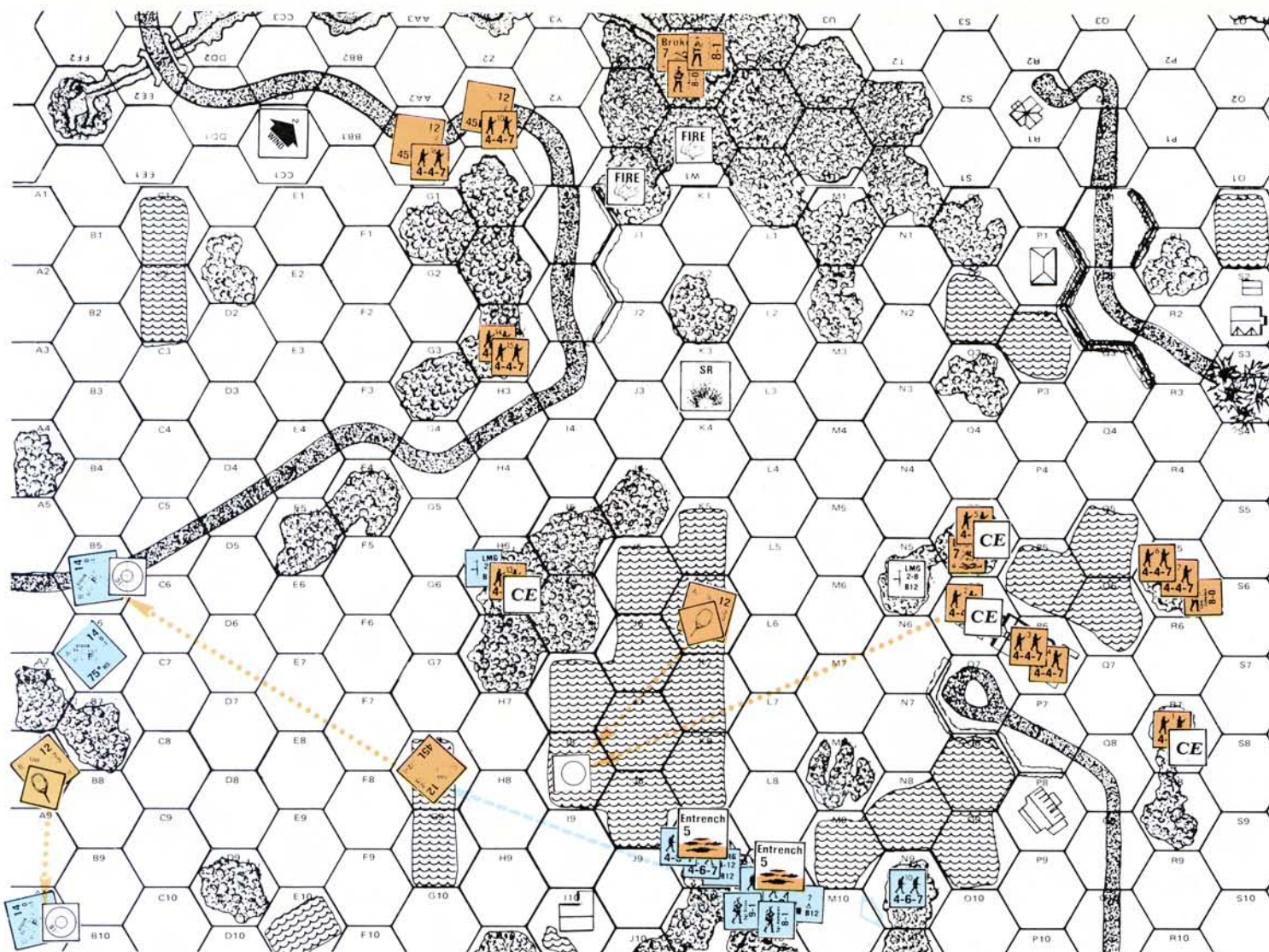
GERMAN TURN 2—Although the German receives good news in the form of the arrival of his STGs he has no Prep Fire opportunities and entrenches instead. In the Russian Defensive Fire Phase, the recently revived Sgt. Kelso survives the long range fire of the Russian 2nd squad but is gunned down in the open at 4I8 by the T26S/A machinegun. With his loss, the German morale drops a level. The other forward Russian tanks acquire targets against the moving STGs. The only German fire is limited to a MMG attack on the rear armor of T26S/C.

The withdrawal of the 10th squad in the Advance Phase is understandable given its failure to entrench. The Russian will soon own superior fire positions at O7, P7 and P8—thus the relative security of the entrenchments in L9 beckons strongly. But the German, who got into trouble initially by spreading out too much may now get the coup de grace by overreacting in the opposite extreme. Woods entrenchments are powerful positions but the Russian can dislodge them by pulling his tanks into the same hex—and then where will the German go?

The extra leader in L9 finally advances to K9 where it can be of some benefit without being a hazard to the other occupants of the hex.

As to the Russian, I am mystified why T26/E did not fire on one of the STGs in the B row to at least acquire a target. The Russian armor advantage is numerical—not qualitative—and he should be bringing as many of his guns to bear as possible. Apparently he still wants to transport squads to the front with tanks D & E.

RUSSIAN TURN 3 PRE-PREP FIRE COMMENTS

Tank rotated so as to better duel the Stugs. Tanks will go for Stugs while the Infantry continues flanking through 4R6 and tank transported Infan-try will go to close assault the MGless Stugs. It's easier now to kill a Stug & crew than dig out the German Infantry.

GERMAN POST GAME COMMENTS

Under the original scenario conditions, I think I would still use this defense although I would probably put a leader with the group in 4N5. I still feel that under the original conditions the Russians have an edge with the mobile firepower of those tanks. With the Russian shooting the way he did, I don't think anything would have made much of a difference.

RUSSIAN POST GAME COMMENTS

I went for the upfront kills, had good dice rolls, and the German simply never had a chance to duel. In my excitement, I forgot to take as many prisoners as I should have but did manage never to give the German a defensive shot at my infantry in the open.

There are several lessons that might be derived from this new *CROSS OF IRON* scenario. Unlike *SQUAD LEADER*, where it's desirable to tie leaders to platoons, clumps of Germans here will draw tank attention. The Russians should be able to concentrate on any pocket of resistance and throw away tanks and squads in order to try and drop the Germans a morale level. So the Germans might consider dispersing broadly to obtain the following advantages:

1) The Russian must go after each squad individually as simply breaking Germans by fire doesn't affect integrity or victory; 2) You should be left with some infantry to protect your MGless Stugs when they arrive; 3) The further the Russian must move the more time he loses, 4) lots of interlocking fire. Consider the following setup: Sq + LMG in 4B8, Sq + 9-1 + Radio + LMG in 4J8, Sq in 4L8, Sq in 4O5, Sq + MMG + 9-1 in 4R7, Sq in 4T8, Sq + 8-1 in 4X8, Sq in 4Z8, Sq in 4FF7. This gives, in most instances, two connected cover hexes in case a T26 stops atop you and puts you out of Russian MMG range. Consider it an exercise to the student.

AFTERMATH & FINAL NEUTRAL SUMMARY—

Turn 3 and the game came to a sudden and conclusive end when T26/B hit and burnt STG/C with total loss of crew—thus meeting the Russian victory conditions. The German's chances received a crippling blow even prior to this however when they lost radio contact with their off-board artillery.

AMERICAN STRATEGY

Looking back, there is no doubt that the Russian played the superior game nor that he had superior luck (a 6.45 average dice roll compared to 6.93 for the German). Together it proved an unbeatable combination. In my opinion the German owed his loss to his initial setup and the clumsy turns which resulted from it as the German was forced to adjust to the unfavorable events caused by the demise of his forward positions.

I still believe that a strong concentrated perimeter defense in the N5-R5-R8-P8 area to be the best course for the German to follow in meeting his admittedly tough victory conditions. The opposite extreme as illustrated by Mishcon's suggested setup is not without merit and may well be the best course to pursue. Suchar's problem was that he tried to embrace both strategies, i.e., a forward defense coupled with beating feet to the rear. The result was a piecemeal defense which fed itself to the Russian juggernaut in handy bite-sized pieces.

Considering the myriad of complex interlocking variables in COI, I find it hard to criticize either player. The result was a highly interesting and educational contest, albeit a short one. Mishcon's play might well earn a commendation were it not for his hot dice which tended to hide his fine play. It is a pity the replay did not continue further so we could see the outcome of his planned Close Assault on the MG-less STGs. As he points out, the STGs are vulnerable to Close Assault but the infantry would present an easy bonus target and if hit at 3 hex range would be unable to close for Close Assault that turn. Doubtless Jon was prepared to sacrifice one while rushing both loaded tanks into play.

⬡AH

SERIES 100
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SERIES 100 is a pad of ten new scenarios for *CROSS OF IRON* printed on the same index stock and in the same style used for both *SQUAD LEADER* and *CROSS OF IRON*. These scenarios were designed by *COI* playtester Courtney Allen and playtested by members of his Interest Group San Francisco playtest group. Afterwards, they were retested by other regional groups of the *COI* playtest team—most notably Jon Mishcon, Joe Suchar, and John Kenower who contributed greatly to their final evolution. For those disdaining the "design your own" approach, here is your chance to experience more *COI* scenarios which have been tested for balance and constitute top quality playing aids. Now is the chance to employ more of those special armor units provided with *COI* which don't see action in any of the official scenarios.

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In the second part of this series I stated that the American commander (henceforth AC) should have nerve. I still cling to that contention because a conservative AC who does not take risks will surely lose, while the BC with his numerically and qualitatively (at least temporarily) superior forces can afford the luxury of playing it safe to a certain degree. Perhaps the word "nerve" does not accurately describe the successful AC as well as the word 'chutzpah' does. Following the suggestions to be given in this article will require a certain amount of that. Now for the opening analysis.

THE OPENING SITUATION

Actually, anyone who has read part II will soon see that this analysis is simply a mirror image of the opening situation analysis in the previous article. The difference is, of course, that we are now seeing it through American eyes.

CANADA: Not too many options for the American here. Although the taking of Quebec would cause a serious delay to British planning by forcing their reinforcements to come in at Halifax, the fact that your transport units are useless during the winter makes an effective assault on Quebec impossible. (However, having the Americans occupying Quebec at the start might not be a bad idea for a variant.) For an effective winter assault on Quebec, you not only need more supplies than the British, (which you can get) but you need an artillery unit (which you can't get, at least in time). Therefore, a wiser move would be to attempt the control of Montreal in order to deny control of the Middle States and/or New England area to the British. Simply bring up the artillery from Ticonderoga and your supply and CA strength point from Quebec and construct your fort. The trouble here is that you had better bring up a CA or two from Boston if you don't want to automatically be fighting at a disadvantage against British regulars. A more conservative move would be to pull back into Ticonderoga and reinforce that position. You would save an artillery unit, thus strengthening your defensive position. However, you are not really forcing the BC to commit himself; he can ignore your position, stay on the defense in Canada, and send his extra troops to where they can do you more harm. By fortifying and reinforcing Montreal, you force the BC to decide how much material and men Canada is worth to him. And if you do decide to stand in Montreal, reinforce it to the point where the British reinforcements in May can get no better than 1-1. You cannot afford to use more than 3 RM here because any more than that is automatically removed at the next interphase. Therefore, any CA will have to come from Boston, which is where we go next.

NEW ENGLAND: You face virtually the same problem as the BC in this area. Here you have your greatest concentration of combat power anywhere, and yet at the same time you are confronted by a superior force in Boston, entrenched, supplied, supported by artillery, and even furnished with naval transport capable of moving the better part of them out to sea! While it would be foolhardy to assault Boston, neither can you afford to send your entire army of regulars off to the South and leave Canada to the whim and fancy of the BC. (Not to mention New England.)

Here is where the conservative is separated from the entrepreneur. You can expect the British to send up to 6 BR elsewhere by sea. A good way to throw a monkey wrench in that is to start your force

confronting the British in the same hex as his. What this does is to penalize naval movement out of that hex by 5 MP. If he is escorting his transport unit with his battle fleet, he cannot threaten the Deep South until March. If he sends his battle fleet on a "Tokyo Express" run, his force will arrive in segments, and you can attack his unescorted transport fleet with the Continental Navy and pray for a 6. In any event, it pays to sit on Boston at the start. Move the Continental Navy off the east edge of the board in February and look for an opening to attack an unescorted transport fleet before having to come back to base. If not, your navy will have to sit in port quite a bit. Which one, we will discuss later.

Assuming that the BC has pulled 6 BR out of Boston, this means that you can reduce your forces confronting him as well. You will send from 4-6 CA to Montreal, so that leaves you 12-14 CA. About 2/3 of your remainder can pull back to defend interior New England, while the rest head south to bolster your militia. It is definitely recommended that you get some CA to every area as soon as possible, as your replacement rate will suffer without them.

MIDDLE STATES: There is a possibility that the British may land in this area, although it has negative features which shall be restated here. A positive feature is that New York can be reached on the first move by the British battle fleet, thus immediately capturing a strategic port. As stated in the previous article, this area suffers from the fact that you can harass the British from three sides, and your regular army is able to intervene in a relatively short time. For these reasons, I feel that more attention should be paid to the possibility of naval invasion in other areas.

SOUTH CENTRAL: this is an area which has a fairly high probability of being invaded. Your main problem is that you have few troops initially to defend this area with. Another is that your Continental regulars cannot intervene effectively until May or June. One advantage is that the BC, as in all the previous situations, must have to contend with defending against attack from three sides. However, the relatively cramped area of the South Central states makes defense easier for both sides. If the British should be allowed a firm control of this area, it would effectively split the colonies in two.

DEEP SOUTH: this is the area I recommended for the main British effort using the "incoming tide" strategy. This area is extremely difficult for the CA to get to before August. It can also only be assaulted from one direction unless you can slip some troops behind his lines from the mountains. Since this is the area I recommended, we will assume a British main effort here. The suggestions given here can be applied to the defense of other areas as well.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The main assumption of the "incoming tide" strategy is that the American must either retreat before greatly superior British forces or be destroyed piecemeal. To an extent this is true. In the Deep South the American should initially avoid combat and hinder British conquest and consolidation of the area for as long as possible. One very good way is through the proper use of the Continental Navy. (Gets more useful all the time, doesn't it?) Although it cannot engage battle fleet units, it still constitutes a naval UNIT. A naval unit sitting in an uncontrolled (not British occupied) port cannot be

IN THE 1776 CAMPAIGN

Part III of The 1776 Thesis
by John Lockwood

attacked by enemy naval units, nor can ANY enemy naval units move into the same hex. If a naval unit cannot move into a hex, then it certainly cannot land any troops there, either. So by the simple expedient of starting your navy in a strategic port, (say, Charleston, for instance) you block the landings of any British forces in that port, forcing him to land elsewhere and assault the port by land. This at least buys you a little time. For that matter, why should your forces stay in Charleston and get creamed when you can pull back and put up a stronger resistance at Hillsboro? If you decide to pull back, I suggest that you destroy the fort. It will be of no further use to you, and why give the BC a free fort? Your fleet can cover your retreat from the fort, leaving one factor temporarily behind in order to destroy the fort. So until the CA forces arrive, (you will probably be able to get a factor or two from the South Central area) you have 8 RM, 1 supply, and 1 artillery unit. The earliest that you can get a CA to reinforce your position is in April after the interphase. Now the big question is: How do you go about defending against a British wave advance which utilizes greatly superior numbers? The key to the American solution lies in supply. No matter what the BC does, he can never get any more than two supply units at the beginning of each spring, summer, and fall quarter. On the other hand, you get one supply unit at the beginning of the spring quarter for each area not controlled by the British. That should be four supply units in April immediately. In addition, you get a supply for each area in which no strategic towns are controlled by the BC. You should count on being able to get at least one supply from this source, two if the BC has really concentrated his forces in his wave. The point I am trying to make is, you have an initial supply advantage over the BC which you can put to good use. Opposing a British advance does not mean to necessarily fight to the last man. The real object here is to make the BC expend HIS supply in attempting to clear you from a town. Once he passes the point of no return, (two attacks) you then look for an opportunity to break off combat as soon as possible. The BC must either force you out or leave a garrison force too strong for you to counterattack safely. The more supply the BC expends in combat, the less that he has available for building forts and supplying his important positions on the coast. Summed up, it is profitable for you to force the BC to use up his supply, but it is NOT profitable for you to prolong combat for any longer than necessary to expend his supply unit. Your supply situation deteriorates the farther the BC advances, so it is to your advantage to force combat early and often. (At reasonably survivable odds, of course. It does not pay to stand and fight if the odds are going to be greater than 2-1. The BC can then conceivably attack you without supply at 3-2 and save a supply unit, thus defeating your purpose.)

This all goes back to basic battle tactics. The withdrawal can be a game saver for either side, but it carries potential disaster should you misjudge the intentions of your opponent. As mentioned in Part I, the defender who has supply is very much in control of the situation. On the second attack, if the BC commits his supply, thus insuring its removal, the AC can withhold supply and attempt to break off combat. This will leave the unsupplied British forces facing a supplied American force, since the AC only used his supply once and therefore was not compelled to remove it. Needless to say, this is a very risky tactic to employ if you are not familiar with your opponent's habits. Of course, since the British supply rate is always constant, it is to his advantage

to advance as rapidly as possible to cut your supply rate as quickly as possible. Remember though, the BC will very rarely force march as it always means he must leave behind his supply, thus forfeiting his numerical advantage.

THE MIDDLE GAME

This portion of the game corresponds roughly to the period after the British buildup in 1776 and extends to the period after French intervention. The BC will usually have succeeded in occupying the Deep South by the winter of 1777 at the latest. The main American concern during this stage of the game must be to hold the British advance to the relatively constricted area of the South Central states, as this area is very easy to defend. Actually you have two different courses of action during this phase. You can continue to be a die hard, forcing the BC to either consume men and supplies to force you out completely or leave a large garrison which detracts from his wave. Your second option is to pull back before the advance to save men and supplies, entrenching and fortifying the Middle States and New England area, concentrating especially on fortifying those towns which the BC MUST occupy to win. (These towns are: Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah.) The BC will obviously have gotten control of some of these towns. However, you can protect one of these cities with the Continental Navy, (if it's still around) OR you must fortify one of these cities at the beginning of the game. The reason that fortifications are of any use to the American is that the BC cannot control a town in which there is a fort unless he has at least 1 BR or TM factor INSIDE the fort. Conceivably then, the Americans can win by occupying a fort in one of the required cities for a British victory, and allow the BC to occupy every other town on the board! Admittedly, that is a tad unrealistic, but it can happen with the game's present victory conditions.

Personally, I favor the die hard approach for two reasons. For one thing, you do not do the British any damage by pulling back. If anything, you are doing them a big favor by surrendering towns without a fight. The second big reason is that the more areas that you can keep from falling completely under British control, the more you increase the chances of French intervention. And French intervention is what will turn the game around for the American, if the game can be turned around at all.

When you do get French intervention, I would not send the French fleet dashing off to the West Indies along with your reinforcements. Fleet for fleet, the French Navy is superior to the British. Discounting variable forces, the French Navy can count on a superiority of at least plus 2 in a combat situation. An astute BC can then use his navy in the same manner in which the Americans used the Continental navy by stationing a battle fleet or transport unit in Charleston, Savannah, Georgetown, and Wilmington. This blocks any attempt by the Franco-Americans to land troops in the Deep South. Any landing must then be made on a coastal square at great cost in mobility. Of course, use of this tactic does necessarily concede free use of the sea lanes to the French. Any attempt on the part of the BC to regain naval superiority must wait until the British navy is able to bring its variable forces into play. Of course, the same tactics used by the British in the face of superior naval forces can be applied by the French as well in a similar situation

A word on your worst enemy, winter reduction. Using the variable reduction chart, it would be advisable to pull out temporarily from high reduction areas immediately before the onset of the winter with its accompanying losses, and returning after the reductions have occurred in order to cut your losses as much as possible.

THE END GAME

This phase covers the period from French intervention to the end of the game. The American should keep the French fleet massed with his transport to minimize British interference. If the American makes the mistake of dispersing the fleet, the BC will simply mass his fleet and bushwack anything within easy reach. The American would do well to take a hint from British strategy and keep a force of Franco-Americans at sea, always looking for an unguarded port behind British lines. If the BC is too thorough for that sort of thing, and he happens to have his fleet guarding the important ports, the American can still create havoc by landing on the coast at a point FAR removed from British lines. (Such as Savannah.) The farther from the main British forces that the landing is made, the greater the eventual effect will be. Any force that is sent to deal with the invaders must be at least equal to it to have a chance of stopping it. Once a strategic town in the area is taken, the invading force can be strengthened at the next interphase due to the improved reinforcement status of the area. Another positive effect is that the British must detract from their wave, thus weakening the impetus of their main advance. The AC should not be satisfied with just invading once. He should probe with his fleet as much as possible, invading at widely separated points behind the British lines. If he ignores your invasions and tries to continue his advance, he will soon find himself losing control of formerly secure areas. Unless he has variable forces available, he does not dare risk attempting a counterinvasion, fearing the possibility of having his whole fleet temporarily put out of commission by a French attack. (Using the fleet in a piecemeal fashion only guarantees its piecemeal destruction.) If the American executes this tactic properly, the BC will soon find himself in a position similar to that of a little boy attempting to plug up all of the holes in an increasingly leaky dike. The main "wave advance" will become stagnant as the BC pulls more troops from the main body to deal with the amphibious landings.

To sum up the overall American strategy, the American should combine standing fast with substantial forces in strategic towns with tactical avoidance of combat aimed at maximum expenditure of British supply. The American should destroy anything of possible use to the British, which includes forts, artillery units, and anything else which seems likely to fall into the hands of the BC. He should make maximum use of the French forces when they arrive by striking as deep as possible behind British lines and continue to strike as often as practicable, with the aim of creating the very situation the Wave advance attempts to avoid; a war with no discernible front line.

That about wraps it up, folks. And just keep in mind those inspiring words of Mrs. Cornwallis to her son, the general: "If you can't be good, son, be good AT it!"

PANZER DREAMER

by Bob Proctor

I've been a happy and dedicated wargamer since 1959, but ever since that first game of *TACTICS II*, one particular aspect of gaming has been bothering me. The certainty. Not certainty about the outcome of the game. Not certainty about the optimum strategy. But when I can look over and see exactly where the enemy is and know exactly what he can do, I feel like Mars must have felt while looking down from Olympus on the battles of mere mortals. As I know from military histories, this exactitude is a far cry from the confusion and lack of communication that reign on the battlefield. In actual battle—such as in North Africa or in the Solomons in WW2—surprise often seems to be the single most crucial element of victory, but it has been largely neglected in wargames.

I don't mean that I'm unimpressed by the various attempts to introduce the "fog of war" into simulations: simultaneous movement, hidden set-up, decoy counters, unknown combat strengths, mechanical breakdowns. All of these are worthy devices and generally improve any game in which they are used. Unfortunately, they also add to the amount of time needed to play. This means I get to make fewer decisions in a given amount of time, and also that it takes longer to see the results of my decisions. In short, I get to do less gaming. I'm willing to trade some time for more uncertainty—more excitement—but I keep wondering if maybe I could have *both*.

The method which seems to give the most "fog" for the least investment of time is the double board system. While the concept is very old (remember *BATTLESHIPS*?), it was introduced into commercial wargaming with *BISMARCK* in the early 1960's. (Does anyone know of an earlier instance?) The idea is suitable for any boardgame. Each player has a separate board on which his units deploy. Neither can see the other's units. Unless there are rules governing searching (as in *BATTLESHIPS*, *BISMARCK* and *MIDWAY*), a neutral third party (referee) must oversee both boards and inform the combatants when they make contact or spot an enemy unit. It is a straight-forward matter to play any wargame this way; no rules need be changed. But it is damned hard to find a good referee! Often a third board is needed so that the ref can keep both sides set up together. Otherwise he'll go bonkers trying to figure out lines of sight. And he must be *extremely* careful not to do or say anything which gives free information to either of the players. The number of times the dice are rolled or an "innocent" question asked aloud ("Do you want to opportunity fire?") may reveal crucial information. Nor can the ref ask questions about the rules ("Can cavalry go through woods?"), he must know the game well or slow it down while he consults the book.

The result, then, is that the more uncertainty we introduce into a game, the more laborious it is to play. On top of this, the most detailed simulations are becoming more complex—there are more factors to take into account. Is it any wonder that games take longer to set up? Longer to finish? Especially, longer to learn? Programmed instruction rulebooks yet! Where will it all lead?

To me it seems clear that the next few years will see a massive influx of computers into serious wargaming. There, at last I've got to my subject! As soon as the shouting dies down I'll continue . . .

Picture, if you will, the following vignette:

Our Typical Gamer, call him Al, is just back from a week-long vacation. He has a free evening and feels like a game, so he calls friend Zeke to see if he would like to finish a scenario of *PANZER LEADER* which the two had started back before Al left.

"Sure!", says Zeke, "But let's keep it to an hour and 20 minutes, I want to watch Creature Features tonight."

"OK, but I wish you'd get a second TV! Get ready . . . "

Al sits in front of his computer, which is as small as a stereo receiver and connects with a color TV and a typewriter keyboard. He turns them on and puts a tape cassette into a small recorder, also connected to the system.

"OK, Al, power's on!"

Al puts his phone receiver into two rubber cups on top of a small box. The phone line will connect his computer with Zeke's during the game. He hits a few keys and his screen displays this heading:

Panzer Leader	date started: 10-22-84
	date last played: 10-22-84
Allied: Al	-this display
German: Zeke	-secondary display
Status:	German went first, 16.5 turns
	complete. German to move.
	(turn 17 combat complete)

Al had forgotten most of the thread of play so he ran through his stock routine for these situations.

First, he typed in a command to display the whole mapboard on the TV. On this scale, all of his units were just green squares on the terrain. Another command made all of his infantry units blossom into very bright color, then he did the same for his armor and artillery.

The scenario they were playing was one in which victory conditions and OBs were assigned by chance, so Al reviewed these too. He had to make a spoiling attack which would inflict 50% losses in attack factors on the enemy. He had no way of knowing what Zeke's objectives were, but he had left himself the following reminder:

The German appears to be concentrating defensively around Wiln but has a strong force (six AFVs and one 88 so far, but no infantry) which suggests that his victory conditions require him to take something on my board. However, he may have a small force and be trying to bluff me into being cautious. Forty-three factors of his have been eliminated.

Al knew that Zeke loved to use deceptive unit mixes and deployments. In their last game he had won by holding back two tank platoons and running out to grab his objective on the last turn after luring all of Al's reserves into a pitched firefight at the other end of the board.

Al called back the map and displayed the locations of all spotted enemy units. They flashed in blue around Wiln. With his light pen (like a small flashlight), he outlined an area containing all of the enemy units and "zoomed" in to magnify this region on the screen. Unit types and strengths were now visible on the "counters". The contents of stacks were shown at the bottom of the screen, keyed to letters which appeared on the map.

By the time Al had finished studying the situation, a message flashed indicating that the German move was done. He hit the command to proceed and the whole board jumped back onto the screen. One of the blue units was flashing, indicating that it was about to move. As Al watched, the half-track moved off, in retreat, over a clear hilltop. As it reached the crest, Al punched the interrupt button, freezing the action. All of his units with a line of sight shone brightly. Should he opportunity fire? No, halftracks didn't have large enough attack factors, maybe something better would show up. He was pretty certain that Zeke was unaware of the AT guns which had just been moved to a fringe of woods well forward. He hit "continue" and the carrier disappeared over the hill. Now a second blue unit appeared out of the woods and began to follow the same route. This was a much juicier target—a truck towing a large howitzer! Al hit "interrupt" as it reached a hex within LOS of a mortar. Indicating the mortar with the light pen, he entered the opportunity fire (OF) command. A message told him that he couldn't OF with that mortar because the target had not been in LOS long enough. He restarted the action and let the truck reach the hilltop before he stopped it. Indicating the mortar again, he asked for an odds display. It was only a 3 on 1 now, because the target was elevated, so Al used the pen to add an AA battery to the attack to get a 4 on 1. Bye, bye, target! There was a pause while Zeke was shown the newly disclosed guns (if he could see them) and got the option to change the remainder of his move. A message appeared to say it was the Allied turn; there were no other visible moves by the enemy.

"Still hiding from me!", thought Al.

Al had been eyeing a wooded hilltop hex which had a good view of the open ground which he wanted to cross to reach the woods in which the Germans had been hiding. He realized that if he lost one more tank unit it would put him over 50% his strength lost, which *could* figure in Zeke's victory conditions. He feared an 88 on that hilltop. Al indicated the hex with the pen and highlighted all of the hexes which could be attacked from there. Almost all of the ground between Al's units and Wiln lit up!

"That does it.", thought Al, and he picked a 155 to plaster the hex with direct fire. The attack wouldn't hurt an AFV, if one was there—the attack was halved since nothing had been spotted in the hex and there was a die roll modifier for the woods, but it would probably kill and certainly disperse any towed gun.

Al assigned several other blind attacks and finally entered the command to resolve combat. A flashing orange circle in one hex indicated secondary explosions; some vehicle had been eliminated there. On the hilltop hex there was nothing. Al took the pen, picked a halftrack with a rifle platoon in it, and chose a path across the clearing and up next to the hilltop where he unloaded. If the hilltop was empty, he would take the infantry through the woods on the back side to try to take a bridge (which the enemy might have been ordered to hold). The command to execute caused this move to be shown to Zeke. Al waited tensely to see if any OF came. No! As the halftrack moved adjacent to the first woods hex, a German mortar appeared in it. Al hit "continue" and his halftrack moved past and on up next to the hilltop. Two dispersed German units (a pink stack) appeared there: a MG platoon and a 75mm AT gun! Al gleefully ran two more infantry units in to mop up.

Much as I hate to leave the game unfinished. I think we've seen enough to understand what it would be like to "computerize" an existing war-game. The computer would:

—ensure all set-up, movement and combat were legal and

—do all dice rolling and bookkeeping instantaneously.

The benefits of such a system would be fantastic!

1. There would be a standard interpretation of rules and terrain.

2. The computer would remind you of rules, making it easier to learn to play and less likely that you'd learn incorrectly.

3. Games could be automatically recorded—it would be easy to print out the moves, even maps, and the board would never get upset between playing sessions. (Erased maybe!)

4. Stacks, no matter how big, would never fall over.

5. You could play face to face, by phone or by sending a cassette through the mail.

6. In multi-player games there could be secret diplomacy by sending messages to a single terminal.

7. Simultaneous or hidden movement would be easy to handle.

The hardware to do all this exists *now*, it would cost roughly $10,000 for a two-player setup. It could be a lot cheaper if one were willing to forego the map display. A system which used hex numbers as references (you'd have to keep the game set up in front of you) would cost less than $2000. If this still seems like a lot then wait a few more years and there may be a *PANZERBLITZ* cartridge for your Atari!

A much more costly item would be developing the programs. Game design and testing would have to be much more thorough than they are now because an error or omission could not be resolved by agreement or a "friendly die roll." It would be most aggravating to have a game "crash" part way through. This is the electronic equivalent to knocking the board over. Errata, in the form of updated programs, would be easy to create but costly to distribute. It could make playtesting easier but publishing more than one version of a game would nullify the advantage of standardization.

As with any technological change, there is a seed of "future shock" here. Besides the changes in designing and testing techniques, computers would change the *kind* of game being played. Designers will be free to "design for effect." They wouldn't have to worry about how complex or cumbersome a procedure is because the computer could do it in the blink of an eye. All the gamer will see is the effect. Combat results; terrain effects; special morale and weather rules; ammo, fuel and supply conditions; all of these will become very sophisticated *without* affecting playability. Imagine a game with hundreds of different types/degrees of terrain and a *TOBRUK*-like combat system with more kinds of weapons, ammo, cover and possible results!

Other ideas which would be practical for a computerized wargame are:

—To require more positive actions to gain intelligence. (like sending scout cars forward first to make contact or spending BRPs in *THIRD REICH* to develop espionage)

—To introduce factors unknown to both players, such as weather, replacement rates, neutral reactions and repair capabilities. (example; a search sent out in *MIDWAY* reports ten tenths cloud cover, no sightings possible)

—To allow for counter-intelligence, false information, along with the possibility of true information leaking out.

—To integrate strategic, operational and tactical levels. Changes in map scale and time scale are kept track of automatically. (example: the transition from search to battle in *JUTLAND*)

Of course, the real dreamers will still hope for a computer opponent, something they can match wits with anytime they're in the mood. So many gamers are playing solitaire that such a program would be immensely popular. But, having watched the painfully slow development of chess-playing programs, I'm not about to suggest that a program that will play *PANZERBLITZ*, and play it well, is right around the corner. I don't even think that it's likely. However, I do think it would be a good idea to try, because even a program that plays *lousy PANZERBLITZ* would have two very useful applications.

First, it could be used to teach the game by playing simple scenarios, perhaps even with programmed instructions. As long as it taught the rules correctly, it could make perfectly horrible moves—maybe even let the neophyte win a few to build his ego.

Secondly, two such programs could be set against each other as a playtesting tool. They could quickly (!) run through ten or a hundred games and test many unforeseen (they're stupid, remember?) rules applications. Instead of playtesting being longer, harder, and more expensive, computers might make it easier and cheaper. Having a "poor" program, one which doesn't stick to the best strategies, would be an asset.

And suppose, let us suppose, that our program improved so that by Version 3 it could play an "average" game—good enough to beat about half of its opponents. I still don't think that such a challenge would be of more than passing interest to a strong player. But how about two "experts" playing a monster scenario where each had a program as a subordinate commander? A time limit on each move would force both players to delegate some responsibilities to the program and create a situation where the players make Rommel-like "dashes" to assume command where the fighting is most critical. Meanwhile, the mediocre second-in-command tries to follow orders ("Hold this town" or "Take that bridge"). This idea would not only be a step forward in command control simulation, it would allow gamers to do more playing by ignoring the dull and static areas and concentrating on the hotspots.

NEW KINGMAKER EVENT CARDS

Are your *KINGMAKER* games getting a bit dull? You can spice them up with the new Event Cards described in Vol. 14, No. 3. Avalon Hill is making available in a special expansion kit a new deck of 48 Events cards including 25 printed Treachery, Gales At Sea, Refuge, Vacillating Allegiance, Catastrophe, and Royal Death cards as well as 23 blanks for use in your own variants. The entire deck is backed by the same rich *KINGMAKER* design which makes the game such a joy to play and cards from the two decks will be indistinguishable from the rear. This special card deck is available for $4.00 plus postage. Maryland residents please add 5% sales tax.

ADVANCED LEVEL MIDWAY

by Mark Dumdei

Though an early generation wargame, *MID-WAY* has some fine characteristics which make it one of the better Avalon Hill games: playing time is short, rules are fairly simple, and there's plenty of action. Yet, there are a few rules which seriously detract from the potential realism of the game. A discussion of each follows along with proposed changes to correct and enhance this otherwise fine game.

BATTLEBOARD PROCEDURE: *Step 9.* Under the present rules, if a ship is attacked while alone by two groups of 5 squadrons each, it will be sunk—even the mighty *Yamato* succumbs to attack by not more than 30 aircraft! More than once a clever American commander has waited to attack the last Japanese reinforcement group alone, thereby sinking the *Hosho, Sendai,* and at least one battleship at a marginal cost in planes. Two new rules correct this situation and give the screening player more flexibility:

1. A ship can conduct *consolidated screening* if . . . a) no other ships are screening it; and b) the ship applies its screening value to defend itself; c) When using consolidated screening, total the number of planes which are attacking the target ship into a combined attack value. Compare this figure to the defending ship's screening value and reduce to basic odds; d) Each group of attacking planes now conducts its attack using the same odds column. For example, the *MUTSU* is under attack by two groups of five T planes and one group of six D planes. Under the present rules, one group would attack at 1-2 and two groups at 5-1 (sinking *MUTSU*). The consolidated screening rule combines all the attacking groups into a combined attack value: 5 + 5 + 6 = 16 vs. 8 (*Mutsu*) = 2 to 1. Now the US player conducts three 2 to 1 attacks against the *MUTSU*. With average luck, he'll score 5 hits.

2. Ships with a screening value of four or greater can split their AA fire equally into two parts. Screening value of 5 divides into values of 3 and 2 factors. When dividing screening value, the firing ship is not permitted to use its "arbitrary screening value of 1" against enemy aircraft. Example: the *Yamato* wants to screen two other ships with 5 factors each, but if the *Yamato* itself is under attack, other ships must screen it against *all* attacking planes—otherwise split screening is not allowed.

Step 10: When aircraft conduct attacks against the "arbitrary screening value of 1", they are not subject to losses. Keep in mind that the arbitrary screening value does not represent any AA fire, but rather a factor for battle odds computation only.

FIGHTERS: change to rule 7—Stripping off fighters can be used to attack enemy bomber and torpedo plane squadrons. When engaging D and T plane squadrons in fighter combat, the fighters *double* their strength for determining combat odds. D and T's which survive the combat proceed to conduct air attacks against enemy ships. Delete references to the use of fighters as extra screening value.

a. The interceptors decide how many enemy D & T planes, and of which type, they will attack.

b. Combat against D & T planes is fought separately from fighter vs. fighter combat.

With regard to fighter combat resolution, the results table was designed primarily to reflect losses in large scale fighter battles. In small battles, the losses are disproportionately high. To correct this problem, use the following rule: if the *lesser* side has fewer than 12 squadrons involved in fighter combat, reduce all losses by *half*. In case of fractions, roll the die again: #1-3: round losses down; #4-6: round losses up.

Even when spotted by recon planes, air attacks often did not arrive on target, especially those launched from great distances. The *Hornet's* planes failed to locate the Japanese fleet at Midway; two years later, a large wave of Japanese aircraft went off course in the Marianas. Furthermore, the range of attacking aircraft would seem to be too short. To correct these problems use these rules:

1. If the target is more than 6 squares distant, roll a die: if the die roll is less than or equal to the number of hexes flown to target greater than six there is no attack. Roll for *each* carrier and for each mission. For this purpose, planes based on Midway are considered as carrier planes.

2. The range of all planes is changed to 20 squares. Planes are not permitted to attack targets at any range which would prevent their return to base.

The rule prohibiting "Kamikaze" attacks has been added because at this stage in the war, the retention of veteran combat experienced pilots was crucial to both sides.

Midway Island itself had a formidable array of heavy AA weaponry. To reflect this fact, Midway gets a screening value of 20 or equal to the relative fortification strength, whichever is the lesser. The screening value is never less than 1. When Japanese planes bomb Midway to reduce its fortification strength, they must roll for AA losses using the Aircraft vs. Ship combat results table.

During the war, it was fairly common for both sides to launch search-air attacks into locations where enemy ships were suspected, but not confirmed. Therefore, anytime a player wishes to conduct an air attack against a square in which an enemy target has not been spotted by recon, (Midway Island itself is always considered to be "spotted") the attack constitutes a SEARCH-AIR ATTACK which is subject to the following rules:
1. At least four squadrons of D & T planes combined must comprise the mission.
2. If the mission destination is within 5 squares, the search also attempts to locate ships in adjacent squares. Beginning with the target square, the searching player calls out zones one at a time. Once an enemy force or CAP is contacted, he must stop calling out zones and engage in combat with all available planes.
3. If the mission destination is 6 or more squares, the search only flies and searches the target zone. Furthermore, the attacker must roll the die before searching in the same manner stated previously for air attacks at a range in excess of 6 hexes.
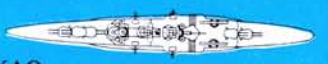
The use of this rule will prevent players from sending out a single squadron each into many zones in a desperate attempt to find an elusive enemy task force; furthermore, this procedure requires fewer planes to do the same thing, but they operate in larger groups.

Badly damaged heavy ships often took many months to repair, denying their use to the fleet. Consequently, inflicting serious damage upon enemy carriers or battleships particularly would have some value towards victory. At the end of the game, each BB or CV (not CVL) which is within one hit of sinking results in 3 victory points.
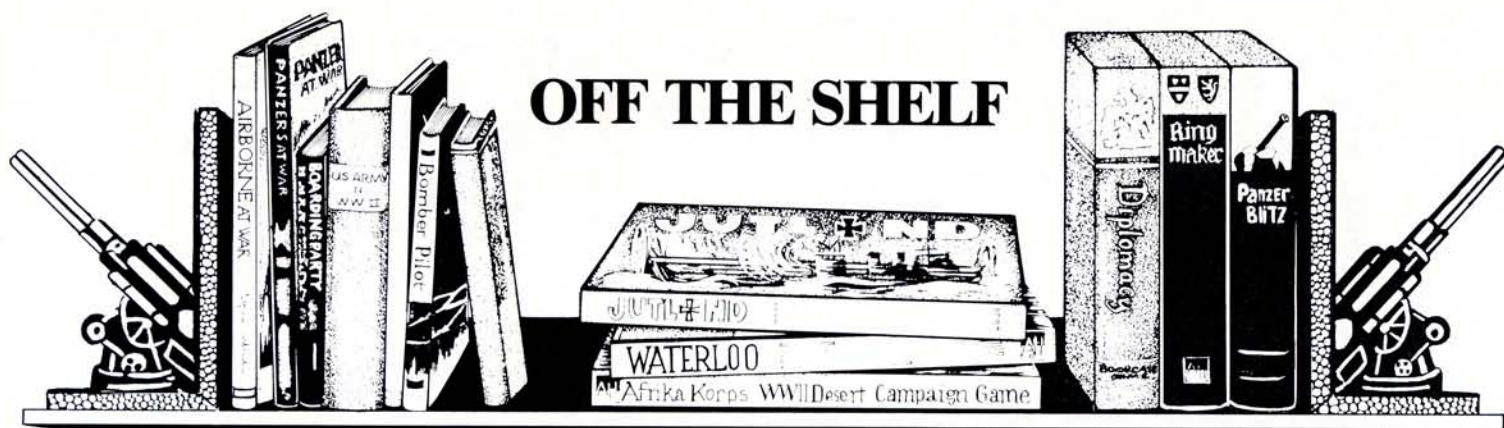
Marine and Army aircraft were not trained to operate from carriers. As a result, planes based at Midway at the start of the game cannot land on US carriers. These counters should be marked to separate them from US carrier planes. Technical note: the *Hosho* had a capacity of 5 groups, so it can carry two more in addition to the 3 groups it starts the game with.

Up to now, only existing rules have been modified. At this time, we'll get into some completely new rules. The most significant change is the addition of an Invasion Force counter which represents six troopships. Each unchecked box is worth one screening value factor and one (defensive only) surface combat factor. Screening values can only be used in self defense. For each hit against the I.F. counter, Midway gains 4 fortification points and the US gets one victory point; if the I.F. counter loses five or more ships, then Midway cannot be invaded. Reduce the *Atago* to 3 hit boxes. Furthermore, during the four consecutive turns that Midway is being invaded, two battleships must be located at Midway concurrently for four consecutive turns.

Attached to the *Yamato* group are six supply ships which are represented by the Supply Force (S.F.) counter. Each unchecked box is worth one screening value factor and one surface combat

MARYLAND	8		TAKAO	3
TENNESSEE	8		MAYA	3
I.F.	6		JUNYO	8
S.F.	6		RYUJO	6

OFF THE SHELF

Fifty-five years ago, when Vladimir I. Lenin was at his peak as one of the most successful revolutionaries of all time, he said, "History is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively, and more 'subtle' than even the best parties." The hardcore wargamer, whose favorite board game is a slice of the past he is reliving, would be quick to agree with the old Bolshevik because the more historical information that is available about the game the more exciting and engrossing he finds it. (Whether or not it is better than a good party is open to question.)

The primary objective of this column, which will appear in THE GENERAL at irregular intervals, is to help make wargaming more enjoyable for our readers by identifying sources of the latest background information in concise, timely and critical reviews of books that feature military history topics. Special attention will be given to titles that are of particular interest to Avalon Hill wargamers.

A secondary objective of the column is to provide the design staff members at AH with a research library of current military titles at the lowest possible cost. This objective is already in the bag because review copies are sent to us free of charge.

Publishers of military books have been solicited to send review copies of their most recent releases that cover all eras of warfare, famous unit histories, battlefield tactics, overall strategy, biographies of noted military personalities, equipment and armaments. Not all of the books that are received will be reviewed but each one wil be listed in a section of the column entitled: "Books Received".

U-Boat. By Lothar-Gunther Buchheim, translated by Gudie Lawaetz, 666 Fifth Avenue, N.Y., N.Y., 10019, Bantam Books, Inc., 1979. 284 pages, 200 + photos, 2 drawings, soft cover, $9.95.

Buchheim shot over 5000 photographs aboard two of Hitler's submarines in an attempt to capture the reality of war before it was irretrievably lost. He has been successful in culling 200-plus black and white "pictorial documents" to give the reader a feeling of the claustrophobia, the constriction and the oppression that goes along with fighting aboard a 220-foot VII-C class U-boat in WWII. The collection of photos include the sighting, signaling and maneuvering together of two subs during a rare meeting in mid-Atlantic. Action episodes include the periscope-level attack and shelling of the hapless tanker, *Clea,* and the surface torpedo assault and subsequent burning of the tanker, *Arthur F. Corvin,* which brought on a thorough depth charging by an American-made, four-stacker destroyer. The violence of the near

fatal attack is attested to by the blurred photos of the crewmen. Buchheim captues the exhaustion and fear in the faces of the crew from a stricken U-boat that has been pulled out of the sea by his boat but who must stay on the deck during the race to safety in the submarine pens along the coast of France. The narrative, which is written in chronicle form, is adequate to support the excellent photography. The student of submarine warfare will be frustrated to see the pages are not numbered nor is there an index. It took 83 rounds from the deck gun to sink the halves of the *Clea* but the caliber of the weapon could not be found anywhere in the book. For the wargamer, who has an interest in the war at sea and especially in submarine warfare, this book is a must to read. For the reader who is interested in the courage and bravery that men can show under the most demanding conditions, do not miss reading this one.

. . . George O'Neill

Boarding Party—The Last Action of the Calcutta Light Horse. By James Leasor. Wayside Road, Burlington, Massachusetts 01803, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978. 204 pages, $8.95.

In late 1942, German U-boats began to wreak havoc on Allied shipping in the Indian Ocean. These German submarines were being guided to their targets by a secret transmitter aboard a Nazi ship, which had taken refuge in the neutral harbor of Portuguese Goa, 400 miles south of Bombay, India. The dilemma faced by the British was how were they going to remove this thorn in their side without violating Portuguese neutrality. The answer was found in The Calcutta Light Horse, a part-time military territorial unit, which in reality was 95% a social and sporting club and 5% an auxiliary military organization. British leaders recruited 18 middle aged merchants, bankers, lawyers and accountants from the ranks of the Light Horse and sent them on a raid of the ship, that if it failed would have been disavowed by the British government as nothing more than a wild escapade of a few drunken civilians. The final product of Leasor's research is the true story of one of the strangest and funniest events of WWII. The quality of the writing is excellent with the excitement and frustration of the operation permeating the entire book, which makes it interesting general reading but nothing special for the wargamer who wants detailed historical data.

. . . Arnold Blumberg

"Herman Goring"—From Regiment to Fallschirmpanzerkorps. By Roger J. Bender and George A. Petersen. P.O. Box 23464, San Jose,

California, 95123, R. James Bender Publishing, 1975. 208 pages, $13.95.

This book is billed as an organization and combat history of the "Herman Goring" military formation from its beginning as a Prussian police unit in 1933 to its demise as a corps in the fields of Saxony in 1945. Every reorganization is presented in great detail by citing official orders and tables of organization. Readers who are interested in the order of battle for companies and battalions will find the book useful. But beware. Most of the information is in German. That portion of the book that treats the unit history and which is potentially of the greatest value to a wargamer is very sketchy. There are some specific and interesting stories about the unit, such as how it saved the art treasures of Monte Cassino Abbey before Allied bombers blasted it, but there are not enough of them to make the book useful to the reader who wants more details of the life of the unit. The authors also have included details about the uniforms, insignia (color plates) standards and vehicle markings. The book is liberally illustrated with excellent black and white photos of the men and equipment of the "Hermann Goring". A hardcore wargamer might find this book useful and interesting but not the novice.

. . . Arnold Blumberg

Battle for Antwerp. By J.L. Moulton. 171 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, Hippocrene Books, 1978. 208 pages, 70 photos, numerous maps, hard cover, $14.95.

While the eyes of Europe and the world were riveted on the dramatic events transpiring in the Belgian town of Antwerp, another equally important campaign was being waged *behind* the front to clear the port of Antwerp and the Scheldt estuary. Even had Montgomery's daring airborne stroke at Arnhem succeeded it is doubtful that the war would have been significantly shortened given the Allied supply quandary. Moulton goes to considerable lengths to back the prevailing theory that Monty erred badly in not first securing the approaches to Antwerp.

The book details the relatively easy advance of the 11th Armoured Division from the Seine to take Antwerp virtually without a fight. But here the British failed to press their advantage and although the port was theirs virtually undamaged, seaborne access to it was not, for the Germans still controlled the Scheldt with mines and coastal guns. Thus began a long struggle for mastery between the Canadian First Army and the German 75th Infantry Division in the flooded polders astride the Scheldt to the final assaults on

Walcheren Island by the 4th Commando Brigade, and the 52nd Lowland Division. Although the German defenders were 2nd line troops of low morale sarcastically referred to as the "white bread" division due to their ranks being filled with wounded veterans with stomach disorders, the natural defenses of the Scheldt were formidable and forced the Allies to new heights of amphibious warfare to avoid the channelizing effect of the flooded polders. Cut off and without armor support, the German's only hope was to play for time—every day their guns controlled the Scheldt was another day that the Allied sledgehammer blows on the major German front were weakened by lack of supply.

While Moulton's scholarly approach is somewhat tedious in its documentation, it nonetheless is an excellent detailed account of this little publicizecd campaign wherein so many Allied AFVs (or 'funnies' if you will) received their main testing under fire. An especially valuable work for those interested in the art of amphibious assault as practiced in 1944.

. . . Donald Greenwood

BOOK RECEIVED:

The Napoleonic Wars by Michael Glover, 171 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1978. 240 pp., 100 illustrations, $22.50.

The German Raider Atlantis by Capt. Bernhard Rogge and Wolfgang Frank, translated by Lt. Cdr. R.O.B. Long, RNVR, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10019, Bantam Books, Inc., 1979. 224 pp. $2.25.

Uniforms, Organization and History of the Afrikakorps by Roger J. Bender and Richard D. Law. P.O. Box 26772, San Jose, CA 95159, Military Arms Research Service, 1973. 256 pp., 354 illustrations, $13.95.

Space Shuttle: America's Wings to the Future by Marshall H. Kaplan, 329 W. Aviation Rd., Fallbrook, CA 92028, Aero Publishers, Inc., 1978. 256 pp., $14.95.

Combat Record of the 504th Parachute Infantry Division Compiled by Lt. William Mandle and PFC David H. Whittier. P.O. Box 3107, Uptown Station, Nashville, TN 37219, The Battery Book Shop and Press, 1978 (reprint; originally printed 1945).. 172 pp., 447 photos, 3 color plates, soft cover, $12.00.

66, A Story of World War II by Siinto Wessman. P.O. Box 3107, Uptown Station, Nashville, TN 37219, The Battery Book Shop and Press, 1978. (originally printed 1946). 175 pp., 270 photos, 5 maps, $22.50.

The Saga of the All-American Compiled and edited by W. Forrest Dawson. P.O. Box 3107, Uptown Station, Nashville, TN 37219, The Battery Book Shop and Press, 1978 (originally printed 1945). 381 pp., 852 photos, 100 drawings, $25.00.

McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle by James Stevenson. 329 W. Aviation Rd., Fallbrook, CA 92028, Aero Publishers Inc., 1978. 104 pp., softbound, $6.95.

British and American Tanks of World War II by Peter Chamberlain and Chris Ellis. 219 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003, Arco Publishing Co., Inc. 1969. 222 pp., softbound, $5.95.

The Battle for Antwerp by J.L. Moulton, 171 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1978. 208 pp., 16 maps, $14.95.

Commando Extraordinary by Charles Foley, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10019, Bantam Books, Inc., 1979. 224 pp. $2.25.

633 Squadron: Operation Crucible by Frederick Smith, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10019, Bantam Books, Inc., 1979. 224 pp., $2.25.
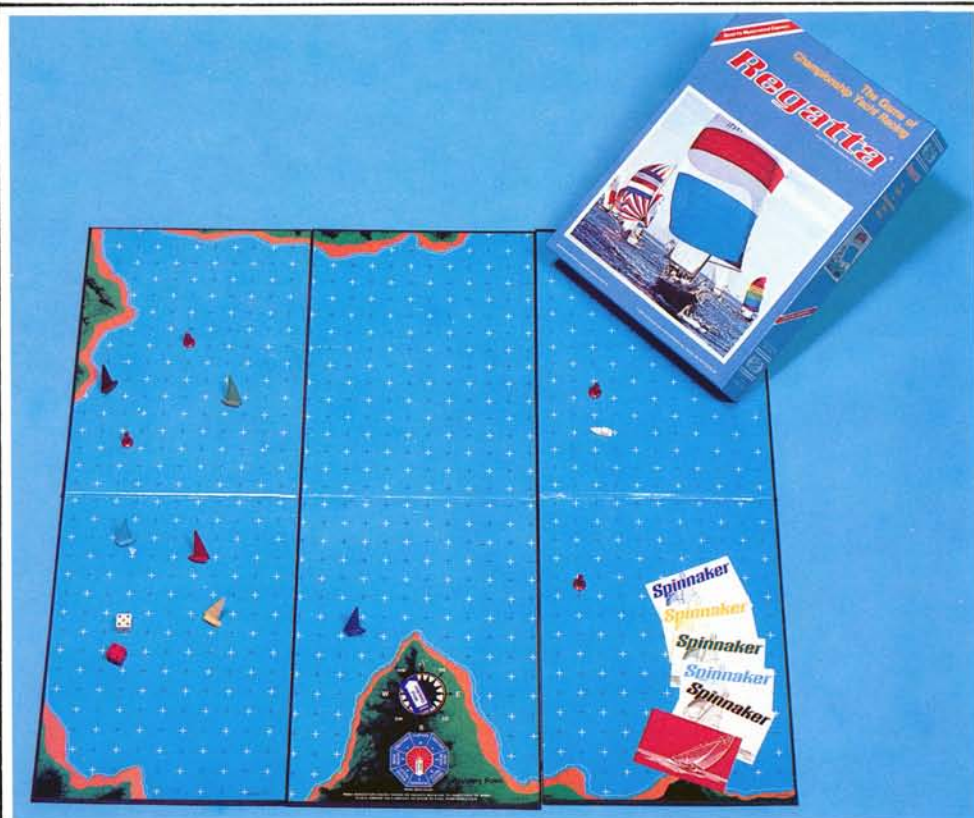
You'll flip over this completely ravamped revision of the old 3M game. All of the factors that are important in real sailboat racing can be found in **Regatta**—wind direction, tacking, blanketing, jibing, spinnaker tactics; even protests and flying jibes!

You'll thrill to the tension of maneuvering before the starting gun. Roar with laughter at the spectacle of your opponents engaging in a luffing contest that takes them off the course entirely. Howl with agony as you discover that your careful plotting of the lay line has left you ten boat lengths to leeward of the first mark.

The game is designed primarily for players with some sailing experience, but the simple and carefully written rules allow any landlubber or stinkpotter to enjoy the thrills and excitement of sailing without enduring the hours of misery sanding the hull or looking for a crew that can tell the difference between a spinnaker boom and a boom vang.

Each player in **Regatta** (up to six) has his own boat to race around the colorful 22" x 28" mapboard on a series of courses that are only limited by the player's imagination. Committee boat, course marks, and wind indicator can be placed about the map in various positions for common triangular courses; Cup-style courses and others

YOU make all of the decisions a true racing skipper has to make. YOU plan a pre-race strategy that will bring you across the line first. YOU decide when to tack, and when to put up your powerful spinnaker for the downwind leg. YOU try to take advantage of unexpected wind shifts, blanket your opponents' sails, and much more—in fact, REGATTA is so close to real sailboat racing that it is highly recommended for training beginners and even experienced sailors in tactics and racing strategy.

All the facets of real sailboat racing are included in REGATTA, including Puffs, Wind Shifts, Spinnakers, Blanketing, Right-of-Way, Tacking, Jibing, and race scoring. And for neophyte sailors, there's a helpful summary of the rules of yacht racing, along with a nautical glossary listing the most common terms used by sailors.

GAME INCLUDES:
- 6 multi-colored diecast yachts
- 1 Committee Boat
- 4 Course markers (buoys)
- 2 dice
- 6 Spinnaker Cards
- Complete Rules with Nautical Glossary
- Full-color mounted mapboard
- Wink Shift Indicator

Regatta is the perfect game for family fun ashore; or for those absolutely *dead* days afloat; the kind where that orange peel you throw overboard drifts past you three hours later. Suitable for ages 10 and up.

$15 Retail

Dear fellow "classics" player,

I address this letter to the thirty or so players who have competed year-in and year-out in the AH500 at Origins. If I philosophize at great lengths, I will waste paper and not get to the reason for writing. Here then in brief, is why I compete in the "classics":

1. I like to compete.
2. I like the classic games best.
3. Origins has become part of my summer. I renew a fellowship with the rest of you each year.
4. Since we all attend it, we fulfill our own prophesy that Origins will be where the action is.

Yet, something is awry. Attendance fell off in the 500 this year while the *RUSSIAN CAM-PAIGN* was oversubscribed in an expanded tourney. I would love to win the 500, but let's face it. We are now mostly middle-aged men. When Bruno says he used to play in 3-minute-move Sparta tourneys he was much younger. Time has mellowed us all. Winning is no longer the only thing and I have seen the AH500 become a gentile affair with British reminding the German to bring in the 15th panzers. We are playing games and Origins is entertainment. As such, I feel we the players have some input into the running of the 500. The game companies are not against this concept, but so far no concerted effort such as this one has developed. I ask you to consider what modification, if any, you would like to see in future years. I ask that you give this careful consideration and send your reply in writing to me. I will collate and forward your responses to the AH staff who will be planning next year's convention. As a preface, let me state that I do not believe we should be discussing any revisions to the rules of the games themselves. The question here is how to organize the tournament, not whether a 2-3-6 can hold up the entire German Army. If you don't think it can, there are other games and tournaments where it doesn't! Also, I firmly believe that the enjoyment I have found at past tourney's has been largely due to the affable and able direction of Doug Burke, Dale Garbutt, and Richard Hamblen. Our first order of business is to insure that they continue to run the 500.

In order to help you think about this issue, and *not* in an effort to foist my own opinions, let me suggest some areas of possible change which were voiced informally at "the Frog Pond" this year late Saturday night.

1. The *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* tourney as well as the 500, *BLUE & GREY*, Pre-Napoleonic all start at about the same time and this precludes double entry to some extent. Could or should these tourneys in which so many of us are interested be staggered or scheduled to encourage multiple entry?
2. Should the field in the 500 be dropped to 64?
3. Should the tourney require playing a fixed number of games with a final round or two for the top winning players?
4. In lieu of a plaque, how about a permanent trophy of some sort with the names of all winners?
5. Should chess clocks be used?
6. Should starting times be moved to earlier Friday?
7. Should a junior tourney be established for those under 16 (this one is my own idea and I push for this)? It has become the standard procedure to "seed" the tourney. Thus, younger players are blown away by us in a perfunctory fashion in round 1. We have all done this to some youngster and it is not a good feeling. This cannot be good for the hobby as it discourages young players from playing the classic games. Naturally, the junior tourney would be more informally organized and adjudicated. My wife has suggested that the junior winner would play the winner of the senior division for a small prize (which only the junior could claim) the chance for the young player to take on the "master" Sunday afternoon might produce amusing results.

Please do not limit yourself to the issues raised here. I await your reply. I trust that from the dialogue between players and AH staff will emerge even greater enjoyment at future meetings.

Bruce Maston, M.D.
1404 Union St.
Schenectady, New York 12308

I don't suppose the discussion would be complete without a response of some type from Avalon Hill so I'll round out the presentation with a few of my conclusions. First, I think it's a bit premature to downgrade the 500. 1979 was the first time in 5 years that the event did not sell out

and there were still only a handful of events that attracted more competitors. While it may be expecting too much for the event to continue to attract a maximum field of 128 given the far greater number of events with which it must compete in present day ORIGINS, the 500 may have been unduly hampered this year by the poor tournament facilities and the extremely late appearance of tournament information in the GENERAL. I fully expect it to stage a comeback to the 100+ participant level in 1979. As for the prize list, we have a policy for tournaments in which we try to return 100% of the entry fees in the form of prizes. We're willing to foot the bill for employee salaries and expenses to run the events, but like to have the popularity of the event determine the prize list. That is why some events which don't draw as many entrants due to lesser popularity or excess playing time cost more than others. Whatever we take in however we return in prizes—a fact that isn't widely publicized. If for example, an event attracts more people than we expected, we usually add additional prizes to cover the excess.

And to encourage more of you to join this discourse here is one such response from a veteran Classics participant . . .

★★★★★

Dear Dr. Maston:

I was surprised to see the decline in registration for the Classics tournament this year, and I think there are a number of very good reasons for it. It is AH's most prestigious tourney, and the theory behind it is, I suppose, that those who compete (or at least those who compete and do well) must be the *crème de la crème* of competition gamers. The theory is wrong. I once did an examination of the *GENERAL* (articles and "Opponents Wanted" ads) to see what the Top 45 gamers were playing. My survey was extremely incomplete because I was unable to establish preferences for more than about a third of the people on the list. Nevertheless, it may be indicative. I was able to identify a total of 26 individual game choices. Of these, there were 11 "votes" for "Classic" games, but 15 votes for non-Classics. To cite a few examples, Kevin Combs, then leading the pack, likes *D-DAY*, *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, and *PANZERBLITZ*. Robert Chiang, a former leader, is big on *PANZERBLITZ*, *PANZER LEADER*, and *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS*. Tom Oleson, always highly ranked, is widely known as an *ANZIO* nut, while Frank Freemon is a *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* specialist. So it is definitely not true that the best gamers are the Classics players.

A second point that needs to be made is that, precisely because they are older games, the Classics have fallen way behind the current state of the art. For all its shortcomings, *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* is a quantum leap ahead of *STALINGRAD* in terms of authenticity. I play to compete, but I play *wargames* because they are simulations. All other things being equal, I would prefer to play the game that is the better simulation.

Third, the Classics tournament is perhaps going to have to have more support from AH if it is to prosper. It used to be the richest tournament at Origins, and in terms of the total purse, it probably still is. However, the competition is coming on strong. The first-place prize in the *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* tournament this year was considerably higher than that for the Classics. This fact alone was enough to persuade me to go out and buy a copy of *PGG*. I have fantasies of someday winning enough to be able to pay for the trip to the convention, you see.

The other reasons for the decline in popularity of the Classics were touched upon in your letter. The tournament overlaps with too many other desirable activities, primarily because it takes too long. The number of rounds needs to be reduced, but the idea of cutting the field back from 128 to 64 may be self-defeating if the idea is to preserve the prestige of the tournament. It may simply be an acknowledgment that we can't scrape together 128 players any more.

My own suggestions for improving the situation are these. First, the mix of permitted games in the tourney needs to be altered drastically, to

reflect what people are actually playing these days. Almost by definition the Classics would drop out, so the tournament would probably have to be renamed. How about the Avalon Hill *Masters'* Tournament? As an alternative, the Classics tournament might be retained for those who really like the old games, but it might be downgraded in status, with the big money moved over into the Masters'. What games could be played in the Masters'? I would suggest *Russian Campaign* and *Panzerblitz*. Both are popular, and, provided the proper scenarios are chosen, both can be played quite quickly. A good tournament might have four rounds, with each player having to take each side once in both games. The overall winner would be the one who turned in the best overall performance in terms of objectives taken and/or casualties sustained or inflicted. Both games adapt themselves readily to this method of determining a winner.

With proper scheduling and restructuring, it should be possible to arrange things so that a player could participate in both the Masters' and a scaled-down Classics.

Gary Charbonneau
Bloomington, IN 47401

★★★★★

Dear Mr. Greenwood,

I hope that upon reading my letter concerning new PBM kits you don't groan aloud and wing it toward the closest waste basket. Although I've been a subscriber to The General for only a short while, I've already seen several letters with subsequent editorial reply concerning this sore subject. I understand completely that rising costs, little if any profit, etc., considerations prohibit new PBM kit ventures. If that's the way it is, then that's that.

I felt compelled, however, to express why I, and perhaps others, would like to see these new kits. I live in a small town in Tennessee with no one in the local area to the best of my knowledge, other than myself involved in wargaming. Thus, to PBM is the only way I have of enjoying your games, i.e., the ones with PBM kits available. Many of your latest game titles sound great and I know I'd love to play them, only not by myself.

You've mentioned in former replies on this subject that many wargamers have their own PBM methods for games without AH PBM kits. Would you be willing to solicit and publish some of these methods or perhaps include a PBM kit sheet in your pages that one could copy from or have printed at one's own expense? Or barring that, would you consider polling your readers to determine if a PBM kit for a particular game is desired enough to warrant manufacturing this kit *with* a price that *would* return a profit? You might find out that many of us are willing to incur the expense in order to continue our enjoyment of this hobby.

Van W. Stewart, III
Manchester, TN

One of the major reasons, besides expense, for not actively furthering the pbm kit line is the increased complexity of the newer games. Multiphase games which are so popular currently are much more difficult to pbm and often require several mailings per turn. Postal play in itself is a difficult enough experience for gamers trying it for the first time without weighting them down with the added rules and inherent complications of a multi-phase system. Therefore, we hope to avoid giving newcomers a wrong steer into an unpleasant pbm experience with a difficult game by offering kits only for those games which are easily played by post. Once an individual is experienced with postal play of the classics he can, and will, readily come up with his own systems for postal play of the more complicated games. For us to encourage postal play of the harder games would be a disservice to the novice and probably result in diminishing the actual numbers of postal enthusiasts. We will, however, continue to publish the more interesting tips for postal play of the multiphase games in the GENERAL as they come available to us.

Dear Mr. Greenwood,

Many thanks for your excellent AH Philosophy Part 73. The letter you received is quite typical of the sour grapes I listen to in the hobby–usually while playing an AH game—of what rip-off artists you guys are. I've gotten to the point of nauseam pointing out whose names are on the design credits for *PANZERBLITZ*. Your distinction between a publisher and a designer should help to alleviate some of this drivel. Personally, I would rather buy a game and pay a few dollars more just to get the mounted mapboard that will last me than have to buy the same game two years later because I've worn out the components. You didn't mention this aspect of complaints against AH (i.e. cost) which is starting to diminish because of the rising costs of lesser physical quality games that some people insist on dumping on the public. I thoroughly enjoyed #16.1 and was pleasantly surprised with the new scenarios for *ANZIO*. However, I think Tom missed a golden opportunity to publish a series of lists of those begun in the appendix of the third ed. rulebook (Nonplayable Coastal Hexes, etc.). Perhaps he can be persuaded to do this soon. One last item—I think many subscribers are missing the fact that they DO get a game in most every issue of the *GENERAL*. The only difference is that you usually already know the basic rules and don't have to stop playing old favorites to enjoy something new. During the present energy crunch (real or imagined) this free "Extra Mileage" is muchly appreciated! Keep up the good work!

Chester Hendrix
Marysville, CA

★★★★★

Dear Sir:

One of the things I've often wondered about is whether it is permissible to photocopy pages of the *GENERAL* for personal use. I often make copies of variant articles (such as the scenario sheets for the recent Coral Sea variants) to keep with my games. Would I be incorrect in providing such photocopies to others?

William O. Rutherford
Fairfax, VA

All material in the GENERAL is copyrighted and reproduction with intent to sell is strictly forbidden. However, we don't mind if you make photocopies for your personal use. In fact, we often omit color overlays to aid readers in making copies of charts they may want to use more than once. Neither would we mind your providing photocopies of particular articles or issues from SOLD OUT back issues NO LONGER in stock, provided you charge no more for this service than your own expenses. Anyone selling such copies for a profit or distributing copies of still available back issues would be in violation of the copyright laws.

★★★★★

Dear Editor,

As a devoted follower of Avalon Hill for a number of years, I feel compelled to write and voice my opinions and concerns on Avalon Hill's recent progress.

I have pleasant memories of the halcyon days not so long ago, when The Avalon Hill Game Company published only one game a year. One of the reasons that I looked forward to the Christmas Season was because I knew I would see the unveiling of another AH masterpiece. I have always admired Avalon Hill for their reluctance to publish an unperfected game, and for their resistance to the urge to mass-produce sloppily-done wargames which your competitors have succumbed to.

However, one cannot help but wonder with the increase in new titles, if the same high quality of previous releases can be upheld in the newer games. I realize that these fears are probably groundless, but I cannot help but worry about Avalon Hill becoming like "The Other" game company turning out countless unfinished games by a certain deadline.

In other words, I am saying that here is one subscriber who does not mind delays in the new releases because of the extra care I know is being put into them. So do not rush things!

Mark Challinor
Wilmette, IL 60091

READER BUYER'S GUIDE

TITLE BISMARCK $12.00

SUBJECT Naval Battle of the Denmark Straits plus hypothetical surface actions 1940-43.

BISMARCK was the 44th game to undergo analysis in the RBG and fared exceedingly well. This may be explained in part by the relatively small response which barely provided a statistically valid sample. We have observed that games with a smaller numerical following tend to have a more enthusiastic response per average owner because the rater is more likely to react favorably solely on the basis of the subject matter alone. Regardless of the number of naval enthusiasts, the sixth place rating of *BISMARCK* at 2.37 is both commendable and surprising.

The game showed fine balance throughout the ratings, bowing out of the top half only in the Ease of Understanding category where several typos, and the complex charts and optional rules of the Advanced Game doubtless caused a ratings letdown.

On the positive side, however, the 1.69 rating for Components set a new record for that category beating the previous best, *SQUAD LEADER*, by .13. Almost as impressive was the Realism score of 1.84 which took second honors only to *CROSS OF IRON*. Undoubtedly the game benefitted from a comparison to its simple predecessor of the same name. The highly sophisticated and innovative search procedures of the new version add a great deal of realism while not subtracting excessively from the playability of the original. It is only when leaving the Basic Game for a venture into the plethora of options that the game bogs down in a sea of charts and complications. Naturally, the playing time is variable depending on the range of extras being utilized to increase realism and the attendant playing time.

1. Physical Quality 2.16
2. Mapboard 3.00
3. Components 1.69
4. Ease of Understanding 2.97
5. Completeness of Rules 2.63
6. Play Balance 2.72
7. Realism 1.84
8. Excitement Level 2.09
9. Overall Value 2.31
10. Game Length . . . . 3 hours, 8 min

THE QUESTION BOX

D-DAY '77

Q: May a supply hex which is controlled for reinforcement purposes be used to supply Allied units not occupying the hex if the hex is in German zone of control?

A: No. The phrase in rule 16.12 stating "through any enemy zone of control" should be read to mean "through *or to* any hex in enemy zone of control."

Q: During the Supply Phase of Turn 3, the Allies control for supply purpose hexes R29 and Q28. They have 10 units on the continent being supplied by these two hexes. During the Movement Phase of Turn 3, the Allies plan to bring an HQ unit into Le Havre, thus increasing supply capacity in Turn 4 to 17 units. Does Rule 16.8 allow the Allies to bring onto the continent in Turn 3 a total of 7 new units in anticipation of their being supplied from Le Havre in Turn 4?

A: No. The phrase in Rule 16.8 stating "if next turn it would take the supply away from another unit on the continent" refers to supply available during the Turn 3 Supply Phase, before any movement. Even if it would be impossible for the Germans to regain control of Le Havre in their turn, the Allies may not count on newly acquired supply sources to bring on the additional units in Turn 3, the same way that they cannot count on unit losses to free up supply for new units. The Allies can, however, bring the HQ and a new combat unit on into Le Havre, since these two will automatically be supplied by *occupying* Le Havre.

RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN:

Q. When the SS panzer corps must be withdrawn, what happens if one tries to withdraw by sea and is sunk?

A. Another panzer unit must be sent off in its place. Furthermore, the panzer corps must be able to move off by normal movement, rail or sea movement. A panzer unit in an isolated pocket with no access to the sea could not be withdrawn.

SQUAD LEADER

43.61 Can a level 3 hex see a level 0 hex directly behind a level 2 cliff hexside of the same hill?
A. No, note this is an exception to the case stated in 43.61.

COMING UP NEXT TIME

factor. Screening values can only be used in self defense. Each S.F. box checked-off gives the US one victory point.

Provided that the Japanese have lost at least three of their four main carriers before Night, June 5th, the following optional forces appear on the Night Turn, June 6th: Heavy Cruisers: *Takao* & *Maya* (Chokai class) and Light Carriers: *Junyo* & *Ryujo*. These carriers have surface and screening values of 2. Aircraft capacities: *Junyo*: 15 *Ryujo*: 13. Aircraft compliments: *Junyo*: 6 F, 5 D; *Ryujo*: 4 F, 6 T. If the Japanese bring these ships on the board, the US player gets two points for each turn he has held and continues to hold Midway.

To reflect the presence of destroyers assigned to each fleet, the following rule is added: When a Japanese battleship uses its own screening value to defend itself: +1 to screening value. When a Japanese CV or CVL uses its own screening value to defend itself: +2 to screening value. When a US carrier uses its own screening value to defend itself: +3 to screening value. When a ship uses DD screen value, it cannot split its AA value, but it can still use consolidated AA.

US long range bombers on Midway included 6 squadrons of B-17's and 1 squadron of B-26's. When these planes make a high level bombing attack, the screening AA value equals the average AA value of the target fleet. Subtract one from the number of hits scored and two from the number of attacking planes shot down. Include destroyer screening value when the target is a carrier or BB. These 7 long range bomber squadrons are subject to C.A.P. interception; they have unlimited range. The US can only use each squadron once per day. If the long range planes attack on the same turn as other planes, they are considered a separate wave and must attack first.

The US also held the battleships *Tennessee* and *Maryland* in reserve to the east. These ships would only have been committed if the Japanese air losses made their use safe while at the same time recon indicated that enemy surface forces would attempt to take Midway. To reflect these conditions, implement the following rule: if the Japanese have lost at least 30 attack squadrons (D and T) and on or after Night, June 5th, the Japanese I.F. is east of the E area row inclusive, then the US battleships appear on the west edge of the map three turns after these conditions are met, but no sooner than 0500 June 5th. When US ships appear on the board, US victory points for holding Midway are halved—drop fractions. Therefore, if the Japanese bring on the *Junyo* force and the US uses the battleships, point values for Midway remain normal.

The use of all of these rules will accomplish the correction of earlier, unforeseen, design errors, give each side additional flexibility, and eliminate many of the stereotype tactical and strategic procedures now practiced. The screening rules and addition of destroyer's screening value gives Nagumo the opportunity to advance towards Midway with considerably less hazard from air attack.

THE AVALON HILL GAME CO.
BALTIMORE, MD.

AVALON HILL RBG RATING CHART

The games are ranked by their cumulative scores which is an average of the 9 categories for each game. While it may be fairly argued that each category should not weigh equally against the others, we use it only as a generalization of overall rank. By breaking down a game's ratings into individual categories the gamer is able to discern for himself where the game is strong or weak in the qualities he values the most. Readers are reminded that the Game Length category is measured in multiples of ten minutes and that a rating of 18 would equal 3 hours.

	Cumulative	Physical Quality	Mapboard	Components	Ease of Understanding	Completeness of Rules	Play Balance	Realism	Excitement Level	Overall Value	Game Length
1. CROSS OF IRON	2.17	2.09	2.04	1.88	3.37	2.52	2.44	1.60	1.69	1.94	20.5
2. RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN	2.24	1.98	1.85	2.02	2.24	3.07	2.78	2.41	1.78	2.07	28.5
3. SQUAD LEADER	2.25	1.97	1.85	1.82	3.58	2.94	2.36	2.02	1.82	1.92	13.6
4. W.S. & I.M.	2.34	2.40	3.07	2.38	2.88	2.39	2.07	1.85	1.88	2.10	9.2
5. ANZIO	2.36	2.11	1.74	1.94	3.74	2.88	2.62	2.00	2.09	2.15	21.7
6. BISMARCK	2.37	2.16	3.00	1.69	2.97	2.63	2.72	1.84	2.09	2.31	18.8
7. PANZER LEADER	2.50	2.41	2.17	2.34	3.65	2.60	2.67	2.19	2.34	2.20	13.1
8. RICHTHOFEN'S	2.52	2.28	2.62	2.12	2.63	2.94	2.60	2.66	2.39	2.45	6.0
9. CAESAR—ALESIA	2.53	2.92	2.71	2.78	1.71	1.85	3.36	2.64	2.71	2.07	27.9
10. 1776	2.56	2.16	1.76	2.45	3.27	2.62	3.08	2.72	2.63	2.36	33.4
11. 3rd REICH	2.57	2.12	2.47	2.34	4.15	3.22	2.59	2.24	1.95	2.05	34.9
12. PANZERBLITZ	2.58	2.00	3.00	2.03	4.03	3.00	3.06	2.05	2.07	2.05	14.0
13. KINGMAKER	2.60	2.26	2.84	2.34	2.83	3.07	1.86	3.65	2.14	2.41	20.2
14. DIPLOMACY	2.60	2.35	2.26	3.13	1.87	2.39	2.09	4.57	2.30	2.43	32.6
15. CAESAR'S LEGIONS	2.64	2.32	2.36	2.31	2.14	2.23	3.73	3.05	2.86	2.73	13.5
16. SUBMARINE	2.65	2.58	3.48	2.42	2.90	2.87	2.55	2.38	2.22	2.47	12.1
17. STARSHIP TROOPERS	2.67	2.27	3.11	2.07	2.43	2.70	3.57	3.39	2.20	2.32	17.3
18. ARAB ISRAELI WARS	2.68	2.34	3.03	1.86	3.31	2.70	3.57	2.31	2.51	2.52	13.5
19. CHANCELLORSVILLE	2.68	2.62	2.57	2.45	2.26	2.52	3.43	3.07	2.55	2.64	18.8
20. VICTORY—PACIFIC	2.70	2.47	2.36	1.85	2.21	2.79	3.38	3.91	1.94	2.53	18.0
21. NAPOLEON	2.77	2.04	2.96	2.03	2.25	2.86	3.25	4.18	2.46	2.89	9.1
22. FRANCE 1940	2.82	1.75	2.05	1.85	3.30	3.25	4.05	3.00	3.40	2.75	16.0
23. JUTLAND	2.83	2.84	—	2.39	3.27	3.06	3.24	2.53	2.61	2.67	29.7
24. RAIL BARON	2.87	2.98	2.82	3.45	2.07	2.29	2.05	4.69	2.76	2.68	21.6
25. LUFTWAFFE	2.87	2.41	2.91	2.04	2.86	3.02	3.73	3.41	2.82	2.64	24.2
26. MIDWAY	2.88	2.75	3.12	2.56	2.78	2.90	3.66	3.08	2.37	2.73	15.7
27. AFRIKA KORPS	2.90	3.04	3.10	2.92	2.12	2.29	3.39	3.57	2.91	2.77	13.5
28. ALEXANDER	2.93	2.99	3.21	3.19	2.55	2.98	3.43	2.76	2.43	2.86	12.7
29. ORIGINS OF WW II	2.98	2.69	2.58	2.80	2.00	2.22	4.00	4.06	3.11	3.40	9.6
30. CRETE—MALTA	3.04	2.80	3.10	3.00	3.03	3.05	3.43	3.18	2.76	3.05	18.8
31. GETTYSBURG '77	3.04	2.52	2.48	2.50	4.32	3.79	3.07	2.46	3.02	3.21	27.6
32. D-DAY '77	3.07	3.72	4.54	3.69	2.19	1.94	3.00	3.19	2.94	2.44	20.2
33. BLITZKRIEG	3.09	3.39	3.28	3.30	3.14	2.89	2.25	3.67	2.81	3.05	24.0
34. TOBRUK	3.10	2.85	4.68	2.13	4.32	2.74	3.06	2.11	3.00	2.96	21.6
35. WATERLOO	3.18	3.29	3.27	3.11	2.01	3.11	3.27	4.32	3.21	3.01	16.2
36. WAR AT SEA	3.21	3.18	3.96	2.74	1.74	2.35	3.73	5.12	2.93	3.15	6.9
37. BULGE	3.21	2.93	2.80	3.31	3.08	3.40	3.53	4.11	2.81	2.95	20.0
38. FEUDAL	3.25	3.18	4.33	2.64	2.28	2.33	2.12	5.38	3.58	3.38	7.5
39. D-DAY '65	3.43	3.72	4.54	3.69	2.56	3.09	4.38	4.50	3.60	3.56	17.8
40. STALINGRAD	3.44	3.43	3.74	3.40	2.07	2.52	4.37	5.15	3.28	3.04	20.0
41. TACTICS II	3.51	3.43	4.30	3.59	1.45	2.18	2.32	5.47	4.59	4.20	11.6
42. 1914	3.87	3.18	3.40	3.26	5.46	4.32	3.86	1.95	5.48	3.86	55.0
43. GETTYSBURG '64	3.88	3.59	3.84	3.54	2.68	3.39	5.08	4.51	4.34	3.98	12.5
44. KRIEGSPIEL	4.04	3.77	4.20	3.85	2.13	2.94	2.93	6.09	5.20	5.29	9.8
AVERAGE	2.92	2.73	3.02	2.70	2.79	2.82	3.24	3.38	2.90	2.84	19.6
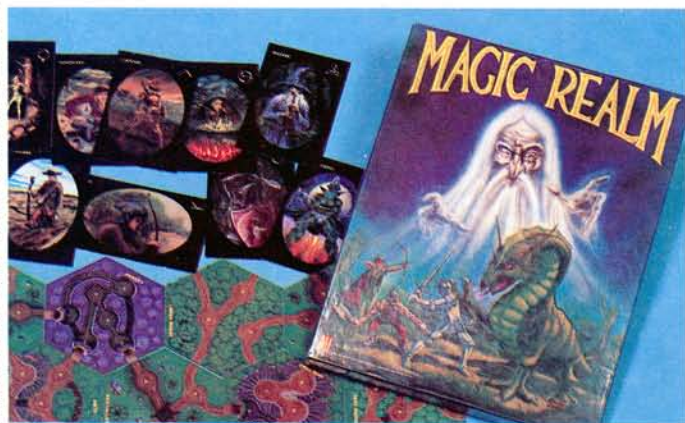
Vol. 16, No. 1 started the new publication year off right with a fine 2.67 overall rating making it the 6th best issue ever. Tom Oleson's "Analyzing the Gustav Line" was the most popular article with 333 points on our 1200 point maximum scoring system. As might be expected, following close behind with 326 points was Tom's other article "Hitting The Beaches Again" which proposed the five new *ANZIO* scenarios on which his winning analytical article was based.

Total voting for the issue was as follows:

The previously stalled *FORTRESS EUROPA* project is once again proceeding full tilt with the assignment of a new game developer here at Avalon Hill. Those interested in applying for a playtesting position for this game should address their inquiries directly to new project head Alan Moon c/o Avalon Hill. Experience with *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* is a prerequisite. Although by-mail testing is expected, preference will be given to those who can attend live sessions with the developer either during the week or on Saturdays during normal working hours.

While exact prices have not been determined yet, it seems a safe assumption that the New Year will bring a new round of price increases as we struggle to keep up with double digit inflation. The coming Xmas season may be your last chance to make that game purchase you've been pondering for so long before the prices go up again.

It was obvious that Contest No. 89 was based on a mail-order only game even without knowing the subject matter as the number of entries fell off dramatically from the previous issue's *CROSS OF IRON* contest. Hopefully the recent release of the 3rd edition of *ANZIO* to the retail trade will get this excellent game into more common usage in the years ahead. In any case, Tom Oleson's puzzle for the new Diadem scenario stumped all but four entrants. Those winners were: Philip Rennert, Washington, D.C.; Claude Drong, Spring Grove, IL; Mark Simonitch, Concord, CA; and Carl Anderson of Peekskill, NY.

The solution for Contest 90 is as follows:

When distributing his forces, the British player must guard primarily against a quick German outbreak. He must make sure that a German ship moving at maximum speed does not get into the Atlantic before he has a chance to close the gaps between Britain and Greenland. The worst possible situation that could possibly befall Britain is to know that a poor set-up could have given the German a chance to escape into the Atlantic undetected. Does he continue to maintain his Greenland to Britain patrol in the hope that the German ships are still east or does he give it up and send his ships out into the Atlantic in a futile hope of locating them before

Infiltrator's Report

they can do damage? The longer his ships remain on patrol after a breakthrough, the more difficult it will be to organize a search once he discovers the Germans have escaped. But even worse, if he prematurely abandons the patrol line, he is practically giving the German ships free passage into the Atlantic. It is a situation which the British player must try to avoid at all costs.

Ship	Position at end of first move	Mode at end of first move
1. Norfolk	B7	patrol
2. Birmingham	D13	movement
3. Manchester	E14	movement
4. Suffolk	C7	movement
5. Arethusa	D12	movement
6. Hood	G16	in task force
7. Prince of Wales	G16	movement

Air Units

1. Scapa LR Recon A	F16	patrol or movement
2. Scapa LR Recon B	D15	movement
3. Scapa Bomber	E15	reconnaissance
4. Hvalfiord LR Recon	D15	movement
5. Eire LR Recon A	F18	movement
6. Eire LR Recon B	F16	movement
7. Eire Bomber	G16	reconnaissance
8. Plymouth LR Recon A	I18 (land)	movement
9. Plymouth LR Recon B	I18 (land)	movement
10. Plymouth Bomber	no movement	

The British player must always revert to maximum German movement when setting up his positions and searches. If the German ships are not located after a few turns of search, at least he is sure that they haven't passed through his patrol line.

The discussion so far has ignored the effects of weather on search capability. Although no defense can prevent the German ships from breaking out if the visibility is at level X, a good defense should and can effectively adapt to the greatest possible changes in weather. Once the British player has ensured that his patrol line is leakproof, he can use whatever is left over to actively look for the German ships.

The *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* are usually given the job of guarding the straits between Iceland and Greenland if for no other reason than they're closest to it. It is best to leave both ships there even though only one is needed to guard the passage at either B8, B7 or C7.

The second ship can't really help anywhere else and it has a nice ploy it can try in conjunction with the first. The *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* should never be placed adjacent to one another. If a German ship makes a two zone move through one ship into the other in bad weather or fog, it can escape the search of both in the same turn. It is best to keep them one zone apart to prevent this and to allow one to move to support the other in case of visibility level 5. The *Norfolk* stays where it is on patrol. It is best to leave her at B7 and not place her in B8 or C7 because at maximum movement, both the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* can reach B7 at the end of their move. At maximum movement, they pass through B8 or C7 during their fifth and

fourth moves respectively forcing the *Norfolk* and *Suffolk* to use high speed shadow to keep in touch. If by the end of the start of the fifth move the *Bismarck* has not been discovered, the *Suffolk* should be moved to B7 with the *Norfolk* two hexes behind.

The *Arethusa, Manchester* and *Birmingham* should be moved to D12, D13 and E14 to form a patrol line between Iceland and the Faeroe Islands. They change to patrol mode in the next turn. If bad weather occurs the *Birmingham* and *Manchester* can retreat to E13 and F14 respectively without fear of German penetration.

The *Prince of Wales* and *Hood* should never be split within reach of the *Bismarck*. The German battleship could quickly sink either alone with little damage to herself. If this did occur, the *Bismarck* need no longer fear British surveillance and would probably break shadow before effective measures could be taken (i.e., intercepting with at least two other battleships). The *Prince of Wales* and the *Hood* should also always try to remain between the *Bismarck* and the Atlantic. This keeps these two ships on interior lines and able to intercept (rather than chase) the *Bismarck* once she is discovered.

A good airtight patrol line gives the British player some luxury in the placement of his two mobile battleships. They need not be placed directly in the center of the patrol line. By placing them in G16 they can aid in search and favorably react to any possible German move for the first two turns. The advantage in placing them here is that they free air units normally slated to guard the Faeroe—Britain gap for more aggressive search operations.

One LR Recon air unit must be placed within two zones of Bergen. On the second turn it can move there on patrol to search. The best unit for the job is one of the two based in Eire and is placed in F18. The two LR Recon air units in Plymouth should be placed in I18. From here they can support any patrol ship in line and/or reinforce the Eire air unit into Bergen. The other air units are placed as indicated to search three of the zones the German ships can reach at the maximum first turn bonus. On the next turn they're in excellent position to search farther north if visibility improves or stays the same and to reinforce the ships and coastal regions if the visibility deteriorates. If this situation occurs, the Plymouth bomber unit should be sent north to increase the coastal search at H17.

Some people might claim it risky to send all of the air units up at the same time. There are some good reasons to do so. The best chance the British have to find the *Bismarck* is in the first few turns before the range of possible locations becomes overwhelming. Secondly, the air search as set up keeps the German ships more than two zones away from the ship patrol line between Iceland and the Faeroes. This gives these ships a second chance to hold the line if bad weather occurs. If the visibility appears like it is going to stay bad you can give up aggressive air search and keep enough units in the air to keep your ship search going and send the rest home to refit. When the LR Recon units are ready to return to base you'll have the two land-based bombers ready to fly as temporary substitutes. If you are lucky and good visibility occurs, the air units can remain away for a couple of turns without risking the integrity of the line.

OPPONENTS WANTED

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★ GENERAL BACK ISSUES ★